2

Parents, Friends, Future,
Their Relationship……
They haven't reached
the conclusion about them.
It's a pitiful and distressed youth.

アフタヌーンKC

木尾士目
Kio Shimoku

五年生

"The 5th Grade"
Soma Yoshino & Shima Akio The Story is close to you

五年生

The 5th Grade 2

木尾士目

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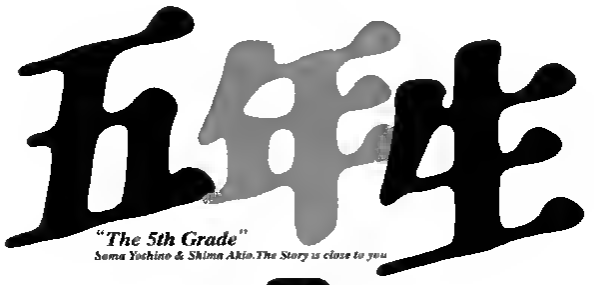


2

Kio Shimoku

Chapter 7
Tokyo Nocturne II

司
六四九
道場二階
梁瀬義山

?
Help!
Ooh
WHAT ARE YOU...
HERE...?
WHY...

...WHAT ARE YOU LAUGHING ABOUT?
HEY!
HUH?
WHAT'RE YOU WAITING FOR?! RUN AWAY!
UGH...
AH

THERE'S A CAFE IN FRONT OF THE STATION CALLED D'AUTRE GO AND WAIT FOR ME THERE
MOVE !!!
YEAH, MAYBE I SHOULD
JUST GET GOING ALREADY!
YOU KNOW WHAT? I WAS ACTUALLY JUST THE-
HAHA
D'AUTRE, HUH?
Hunh?
What
OOH.
Hmph

Ahem
W-WHO DID THAT?!
DID THEY RUN AWAY ALREADY?!
MR KURA-HASHI?!
ARE YOU ALRIGHT?!
YES I WAS JUST A LITTLE...
DID YOU SEE THEIR FACES, OR WHAT THEY WERE WEARING?
THE ONE WHO KICKED YOU HAD LONG HAIR. I DIDN'T GET A GOOD LOOK AT THE OTHERS, BUT THEY ALL LOOKED LIKE STREET PUNKS
THEY WERE LAUGHING AS THEY WENT.
THERE WERE THREE OF THEM, BUT THEY ALREADY MADE A BREAK FOR IT.
WERE THEY ALL DRUNK OR SOMETHING?!
Dammit

IF I GET MY HANDS ON YOU I'LL SEE YOU ALL IN COURT, YOU BASTARDS...
ALRIGHT
BUT I COULDN'T SEE THEIR FACES
AH... NO, I WAS JUST TALKING TO MYSELF
OF COURSE I CAN'T REALLY DO THAT
...WOW
YOU'RE BEING A LITTLE SCARY
UGH... AKIO, YOU DUMMY
YOU'VE GONE AND MADE ME AN ACCOMPLICE...
ARE YOU REALLY ALRIGHT?
WELL, I'M OKAY NOW, BUT I'M SURE I'LL BE FEELING IT NEXT MORNING
Hahaha
...THAT'S NOTHING TO LAUGH ABOUT

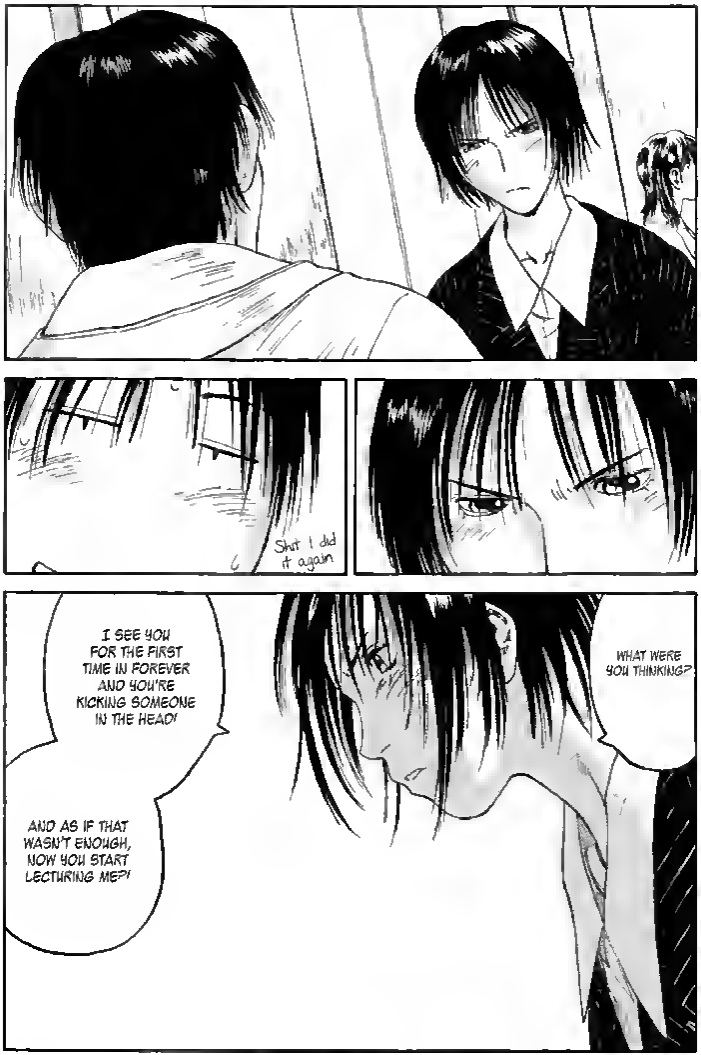
NO, NO, IT'S FINE IT WASN'T THAT BIG A DEAL
WELL, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME TONIGHT
OH, REALLY?
OH THAT'S RIGHT! I'M SO SORRY, BUT I JUST REMEMBERED I HAVE TO MAKE A PHONE CALL
MHMM I THINK I'LL HAVE TO
WHEW...
GOOD THING HE DIDN'T DECIDE TO CALL THE COPS...
MAYBE HE WAS PUTTING ON A TOUGH FRONT BE-CAUSE OF ME
UGH, REALLY
WHAT WAS THAT IDIOT THINKING?

Mmm
Heheheh
MAN
THAT WAS GREAT

HEHEH
NICE KICK, EH?
WHAT
WHAT IN THE WORLD WERE YOU THINKING?!
NAH
JUST ON A BIT OF AN ADRENALINE HIGH. Look at my hand
ARE YOU STILL DRUNK?
SO WHY'D YOU DO IT?
.....

OH, C'MON
DON'T TELL ME YOU DIDN'T NOTICE THAT CREEP TRYING TO MAKE A MOVE ON YOU
HE JUST CASUALLY PUT HIS HAND ON YOUR SHOULDER AND ALL, THAT PERVERT
I COULD JUST TELL HE WAS PULLING SOME "LET'S BE FRIENDS FROM NOW ON" BULLSHIT
YOU COULDN'T HAVE KNOWN THAT!
COURSE I DID
YOU'RE SCARING ME, AKIO
AWW DON'T BE LIKE THAT
I'LL BE HONEST I DID NOTICE HIM COMING ON TO ME
BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE WHAT YOU DID ACCEPTABLE!
YOU KICKED HIM IN THE HEAD FROM BEHIND, AND THEN RAN AWAY

DID HE WANT ME TO PAY HIS HOSPITAL FEE?
WELL? WHAT'D HE SAY ABOUT ME? I'LL TAKE ANYTHING HE'S GOT TO DISH OUT.
BADUMP BADUMP
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO TOLD ME TO RUN!
WELL, YEAH, BUT STILL
ARE YOU TRYING TO SWEEP ALL THIS UNDER THE RUG?
YOU SHOULDN'T BE THE ONE LECTURING ME!
SHIT, YOSHINO, THAT MAKES YOU AN ACCOMPLICE!
I DIDN'T TELL HIM IT WAS YOU, SO HE JUST LET IT GO
NO, HE DIDN'T
WAIT, DID YOU LIE TO HIM?
OH, MAN
HUH? WHAT?
WHAT THE HELL, AKIO!
I WAS GONNA STAY THERE AND FACE HIM MAN TO-
HOW CAN YOU BECOME A LAWYER ACTING LIKE THAT?
THAT'S THE WORST THING ABOUT JAPANESE PEOPLE!

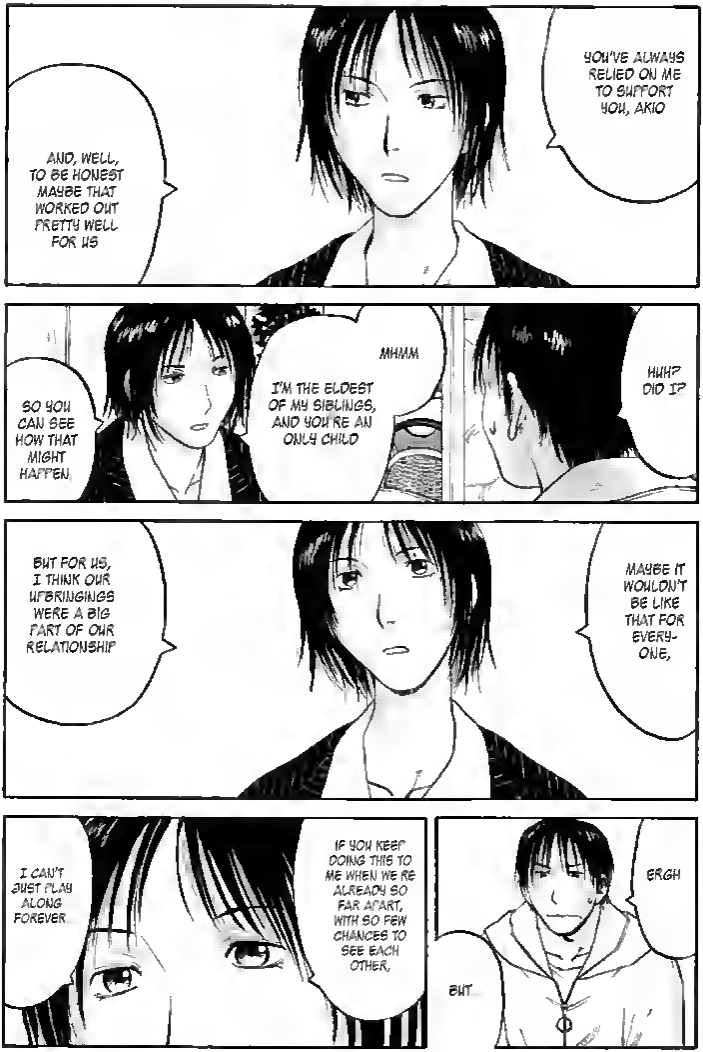

Shit! I did it again
I SEE YOU FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FOREVER AND YOU'RE KICKING SOMEONE IN THE HEAD!
AND AS IF THAT WASN'T ENOUGH, NOW YOU START LECTURING ME?!
WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?

WHERE DOES THIS PUT ME?
REALLY WHAT THE HELL, AKIO
WHY DO I NEVER LEARN!?
ERR... MAN

MAYBE WE REALLY SHOULD JUST BREAK UP
YOU SHOULDN'T TAKE LAWYERS SO LIGHTLY
WE'RE THINK IN TERMS OF THE LAW,
SO WE WON'T JUST LIE DOWN AND LET OTHERS WALK OVER US LIKE NORMAL PEOPLE DO

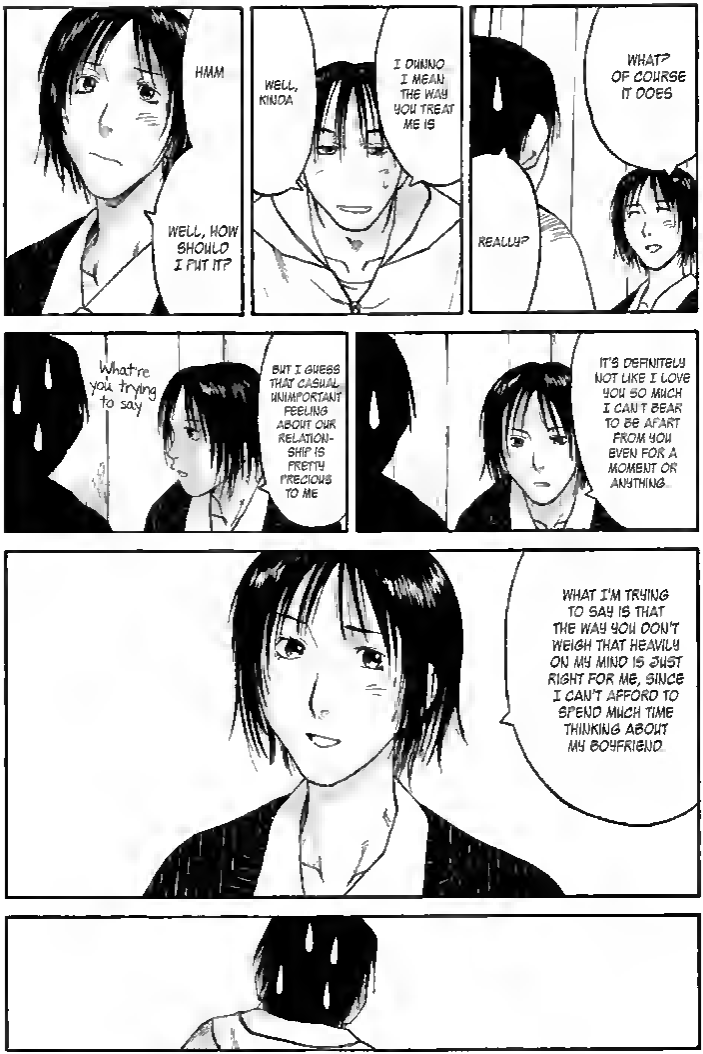
I'M SORRY
THAT'S WHAT YOU SHOULD HAVE STARTED OFF WITH
YOU STILL DON'T KNOW WHEN IT'S BEST TO JUST APOLOGIZE
YOU'RE A CHILD!
YES'M
YOU'RE LIKE A LITTLE BOY

I GUESS THAT'S HARD FOR YOU TO DO SINCE YOU'RE STILL JUST A STUDENT
YOU NEED TO GROW UP, FOR MY SAKE AS WELL AS YOURS
LOOK AT ME APOLOGIZING TO HIM
Hah
OH SORRY, THAT WAS MEAN OF ME
IF YOU TRICK US, DO WE NOT BLEED?
UGH
ACK SERIOUSLY?
YEAH, THAT'S HOW IT'S ALWAYS BEEN
YES
THAT'S HOW I'VE ALWAYS BEEN
I NEVER THINK OF HOW WHAT I DO D AFFECT YOU IT'S ALWAYS JUST ME, ME, ME
WELL I HAVE TO ADMIT YOU'RE TOTALLY JUSTIFIED IN SAYING THAT
I DO HAVE TO GROW UP


YOU'VE ALWAYS RELIED ON ME TO SUPPORT YOU, AKIO
AND, WELL, TO BE HONEST MAYBE THAT WORKED OUT PRETTY WELL FOR US
HUH? DID I?
MHMM
I'M THE ELDEST OF MY SIBLINGS, AND YOU'RE AN ONLY CHILD
SO YOU CAN SEE HOW THAT MIGHT HAPPEN.
MAYBE IT WOULDN'T BE LIKE THAT FOR EVERY-ONE,
BUT FOR US, I THINK OUR UPBRINGINGS WERE A BIG PART OF OUR RELATIONSHIP
ERGH
BUT
IF YOU KEEP DOING THIS TO ME WHEN WE'RE ALREADY SO FAR APART, WITH SO FEW CHANCES TO SEE EACH OTHER,
I CAN'T JUST PLAY ALONG FOREVER

YOU KNOW FULL WELL THAT THE SITUATION'S DIFFERENT NOW
YOU CAN'T JUST KEEP ACTING LIKE YOU DID WHEN WE WERE BOTH STUDENTS
WELL...
YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT
IS WORK REALLY THAT BUSY FOR YOU?
I GUESS THAT'S WHY I'VE KIND OF BEEN IGNORING YOU
OWW, THAT HURTS
MHMM I CAN'T TAKE MY ATTENTION OFF IT FOR A SECOND
OH!
THAT'S IT

THINK OF IT AS ME RELYING ON YOU FOR SUPPORT IN A WAY NOW, AKIO
YOU KNOW, SINCE I'VE BEEN MAKING YOU WAIT ON ME AND ALL
ERGH
KINDA HARD BEING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS GIVE-AND-TAKE, TO BE HONEST
YES, BUT IT'S VERY "US," ISN'T IT?
I MEAN, "I'M LONELY COME SEE ME" COULD YOU REALLY SEE ME SAYING SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
I WISH YOU WOULD
THAT'S WHAT BOTHERS ME ACTUALLY
HUH?
MMM
YOSHINO
DOESN'T IT BOTHER YOU AT ALL, LIVING SO FAR AWAY FROM ME?


HMM
WELL, HOW SHOULD I PUT IT?
WELL, KINDA
I DUNNO I MEAN THE WAY YOU TREAT ME IS
WHAT? OF COURSE IT DOES
REALLY?
What're you trying to say
BUT I GUESS THAT CASUAL UNIMPORTANT FEELING ABOUT OUR RELATION-SHIP IS PRETTY PRECIOUS TO ME
IT'S DEFINITELY NOT LIKE I LOVE YOU SO MUCH I CAN'T BEAR TO BE APART FROM YOU EVEN FOR A MOMENT OR ANYTHING...
WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS THAT THE WAY YOU DON'T WEIGH THAT HEAVILY ON MY MIND IS JUST RIGHT FOR ME, SINCE I CAN'T AFFORD TO SPEND MUCH TIME THINKING ABOUT MY BOYFRIEND

NO, THAT'S NOT IT AT ALL
WHAT?
YOU DON'T REALLY CARE THAT MUCH ABOUT ABOUT ME, HUH
HMM?
DOES IT?
...THAT KINDA REALLY HURTS TO HEAR
IT HURTS DEEP INSIDE
Maybe it's just a stomach-ache
UGH
I DO LOVE YOU, AKIO OF COURSE I DO
I THINK WE FIT EACH OTHER REALLY WELL!
I think you can put it that way!
LOOK! THE POINT IS!
.....
.....
I'M SORRY, OKAY? DON'T TAKE IT SO SERIOUSLY!
The way you're smiling makes you scarier

すーはー
YEAH... YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT
YOU'RE AN ADULT
C'MON! YOU'RE ALL GROWN UP NOW!
WE COULD JUST DO IT AND THAT'D SOLVE ALL OUR PROBLEMS WITHOUT HAVING TO TALK IT OUT LIKE THIS.
うぅ
Y'KNOW, IF WE WERE BACK IN KISARAZU,
はぁ
WELL
UHH, YEAH? I GUESS?
SO
YOU'RE JUST HORNY? IS THAT IT?

WE DON'T HAVE THE TIME, AND THERE'S NO-WHERE TO GO EVEN IF WE DID
WELL, WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?
THAT'S IT?
DEAL WITH IT
STILL THAT'S JUST WHAT THEY'RE THERE FOR
IF YOU TRIED IT JUST ONCE, I'M SURE YOU'D GET USED TO IT
STILL.
THAT'S CALLED CORRUP-TION
YOU'D NEVER LET US GO TO HOTELS AND STUFF, RIGHT?
YEAH, I REMEMBER BACK WHEN WE WERE DATING,
IT'S JUST SO OBVIOUS WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO THERE
OF COURSE NOT
C'MON, STOP ACTING LIKE A KID!
Eek!
YOU JUST WANT MY BODY, DON'T YOU!
BUT!
THAT'S MONEY WELL SPENT IN MY BOOK!
YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT
BESIDES, IT'S EXPENSIVE

WAIT, YOU'RE CALLING ME CHILDISH?
YEAH
HUH?
THINGS ARE GOING TO BE LIKE THIS FOR A FEW MORE YEARS AT THE LEAST, AFTER ALL.
WE BOTH HAVE TO LEARN TO BE FLEXIBLE
THEY ARE?
FINE, I'LL THINK ABOUT IT.
WELL, NO EVEN AFTER I PASS I'LL HAVE TO GO THROUGH TRAINING AND AFTER THAT IT'S THE MOST CRUCIAL TIME WHERE YOU START WORKING FOR REAL...
OF COURSE AT LEAST UNTIL I PASS THE BAR EXAM...

UNLESS WE GET MARRIED OR SOMETHING, THINGS RE GONNA KEEP ON BEING LIKE THIS?
SO WHAT YOU RE SAYING IS,
WHAT?
AND I HAVEN'T MADE UP MY MIND ON MARRIAGE YET
YUP
ARGH, THIS JUST KEEPS GETTING WORSE
THAT'S WHY I'VE BEEN TELLING YOU THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE SIMPLE YOU HAVE TO BE PREPARED
ONCE EVERY TWO MONTHS, THEN?
MMM
MAYBE JUST ONCE A MONTH?
THAT MIGHT BE A BIT HARD TO DO
SOME-THING LIKE THAT, YEAH
I'LL TRY AND MAKE SOME TIME FOR US, OKAY?

I'LL TRY AND CALL MORE OFTEN, TOO
Don't frown like that
SO THAT'S IT, HUH
WELL
GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO DEAL WITH IT
OH
YEAH, I JUST GET SADDER WHEN THEY DON'T COME
OH?
NAH, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THAT I DON'T LIKE PHONE CALLS
Hem Hem
WHAT TIME IS IT?
HMM
TEN FORTY.
YEAH
WELL, I THINK IT'S ABOUT TIME
LET'S GO

WELL... I THINK I CAN MAKE IT BEFORE THE LAST TRAIN, BUT
Let's see, Shinjuku to Tokyo to Soga
IT MIGHT BE CUTTING THINGS A BIT CLOSE
I have to transfer lines a lot
HMM?
IS THAT BAD?
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT SLEEPING AT MY PLACE
I TAKE IT THAT'S A NO?
ERR
I DUNNO
THEN WHAT'RE YOU GOING TO DO?
OH!
THAT'S RIGHT, HE LIVES IN MITAKA DOESN'T HE
NAH, I WAS JUST JOKING
I WAS THINKING MAYBE I COULD SPEND THE NIGHT AT YUSUKE'S
YOU'VE GOT A POINT THERE
OF COURSE IT IS! DO YOU WANT ME TO INTRODUCE YOU TO MY PARENTS?!
My whole family's there!

I'm in Tokyo right now
Hey Yusuke? It's Ako
I can never tell whether he's got it all planned out or if he's making it up as he goes along
GIMME YOUR CELL SO I CAN CALL HIM?
WHAT?
WELL, I'LL GET TO MITAKA AND GIVE HIM ANOTHER CALL
IF HE DOESN'T PICK UP THEN I'LL JUST STAY UP AND CATCH THE FIRST TRAIN IN THE MORNING
YEAH, BUT I DUNNO THE NUMBER
DOES HE HAVE A CELL PHONE?
WHAT'RE YOU GOING TO DO?
HUH?
WAS THAT HIS ANSWERING MACHINE?
HE AIN'T THERE
YEAH
YEAH.
THEN I GUESS WE'LL BE GOING TOGETHER UNTIL MITAKA
It's four stations ahead of Kokubunji
TOO EXPENSIVE
'SIDES, I'M USED TO ALL-NIGHTERS
HMM...
YOU COULD STAY AT A CAPSULE HOTEL
ARE YOU?

SO, I WANNA ASK YOU SOME-THING
HMM?
WE FINISHED EARLY TODAY, SO I TOOK THE CHANCE TO ASK HIM ABOUT THE BAR
OH, A LAWYER NAMED KURA-HASHI
He's actually over thirty
WHO WAS HE?
THAT GUY I KICKED
BUT I THINK HE REALLY WAS TRYING TO MAKE A PASS AT ME BACK THERE
THANKS FOR KICKING HIM
DON'T WORRY, I'M NOT CHEATING ON YOU
WELL, I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE, HONEST...

I JUST WANT TO KEEP THINGS PROFESS-IONAL
YOU SURE YOU WANNA BE A LAWYER?
You're scary

HELLO, THIS IS IRUMA YUSUKE
I'M NOT HERE RIGHT NOW, BUT...
SHIT...
WHAT DO I DO?

Chapter 8 - Tokyo Nocturne III

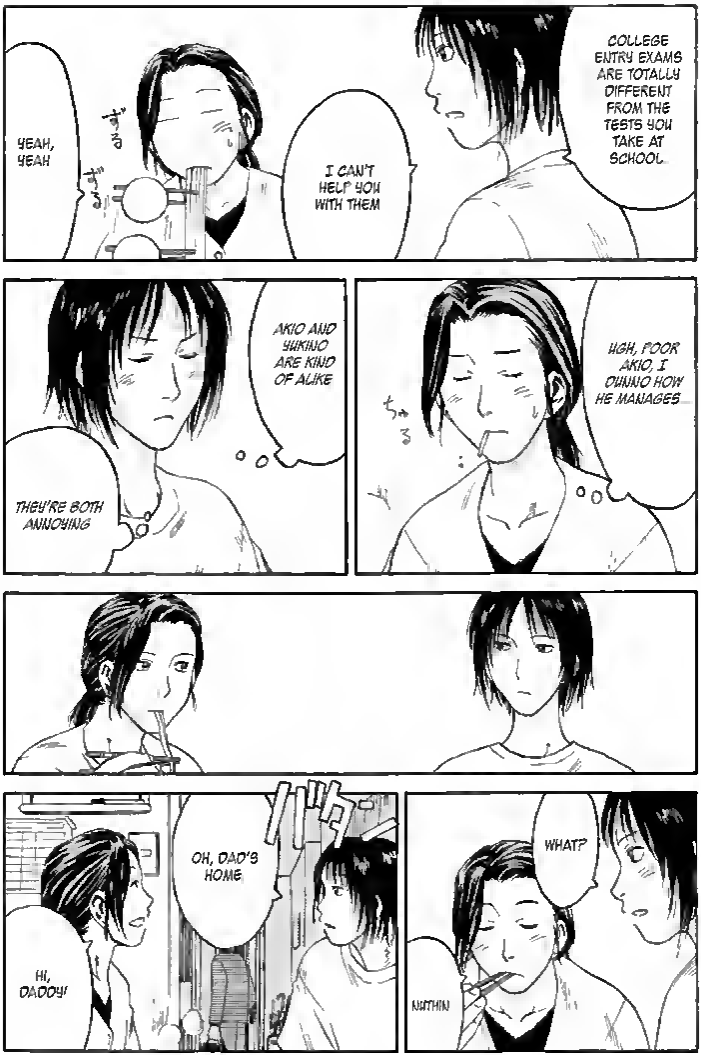
.....
.....
DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU WERE TIRED?
WELL THAT WAS JUST A MENTAL THING
I'M FEELING NEW STRENGTH FLOWING INTO ME RIGHT NOW, ACTUALLY
C'MON, DON'T... I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO TAKE A SHOWER AGAIN
.....
.....
UNBUTTON THIS FOR ME?
WAH!
RRR
RR?

Goddammit I'd just gotten her in the mood
HELLO? ARIGA NAOKO SPEAKING
RRRR
RRRR
HUH?
AKIO?

I'M HOME
HELLO, DEAR
HI, MOM

ISHA BIONIGH SHNAK
HI SHISH
WHAT'RE YOU EATING?
ramen
EVERYONE KNOWS THIS STUFF S THE LATE NIGHT SNACK FOR HARD STUDYING STUDENTS!
I just started warming it up wait about 7 minutes
Mom, is the water in the tub ready yet?
I CAN TELL THAT MUCH BUT WHY NABE UDON?
WHAAAT?
Hmph!
HAVE SOME TEA, YOSHINO
YOU'RE NOT IMPRESSING ANYONE WITH YOUR STUDI-OUSNESS BY EATING UDON. YOU KNOW
THANKS, MOM
IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS!
YEAH BUT IT'S ONE THEY EAT IN WINTER IN CASE YOU HADN'T NOTICED, IT'S SUMMER RIGHT NOW

I DIDN'T ASK FOR YOUR OPINION, SIS
Hot
Whew
I'M BETTING YOU'LL WASTE AT LEAST TWO HOURS JUST WITH THIS "SNACK"
AND THEN YOU'RE GOING TO SAY YOU GOT SWEATY BECAUSE IT WAS SO HOT AND THEN TAKE ANOTHER SHOWER TO "COOL OFF," RIGHT?
IT TAKES TOO LONG TO EAT,
Ack!
NOT A THING!
ISN'T THAT WORTH ANYTHING?
IT PUTS ME AT EASE, OKAY?
You both suck
WELL, I'M NOT THE ONE WHO'S GOING TO PAY FOR IT LATER
OH, YOU'RE RIGHT ON THAT ONE
YOU'RE JUST SPOILING HER
HONESTLY, MOM YOU SHOULDN'T BE MAKING THIS STUFF FOR YUKINO
OH?
I'm not you sis
HONESTLY, IT'S A MIRACLE I'VE SURVIVED THIS LONG WITH A FAMILY LIKE THIS
THERE WERE TIMES I SERIOUSLY THOUGHT I WOULDN'T MAKE IT

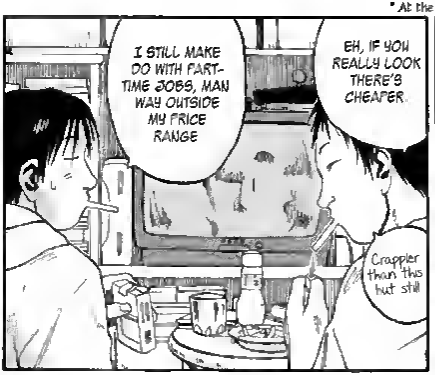

COLLEGE ENTRY EXAMS ARE TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM THE TESTS YOU TAKE AT SCHOOL.
I CAN'T HELP YOU WITH THEM
YEAH, YEAH
AKIO AND YUKINO ARE KIND OF ALIKE
THEY'RE BOTH ANNOYING
UGH, POOR AKIO, I CHNNO HOW HE MANAGES...
OH, DAD'S HOME
HI, DADDY!
WHAT?
NUTHIN

OH SOMETHING SMELLS NICE
WANT SOME?
IF YOU'LL GIVE ME SOME, SURE
HI, EVERYONE
WELCOME HOME, HONEY
I REMEMBER YUKINO HATED DAD BACK WHEN SHE WAS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL
WHEN'D THEY GET TO BE ON SUCH GOOD TERMS?
Sis'll get pissed if I eat too much, so here have the rest
Hahaha, really?
IS THE BATH READY?
YES, BUT YOSHINO HASN'T HAD HER TURN YET...
NO, YOU SHOULD GO BEFORE ME, YOSHINO
YOU NEED YOUR SLEEP, DON'T YOU?
YOU GO AHEAD, DAD
REALLY?
MHMM

OH, THE BATH'S READY, DEAR
BEEP BEEP
OKAY
Whew

THE HELL'RE YOU DOING HERE, MAN?
HAHA, WELL...
MAN, AND I WAS JUST GETTING TO THE GOOD PART...
WHAT GOOD PART?
WITH NAOKO, DUMBASS! I'D JUST GOTTEN HER IN THE MOOD AND THEN YOU CALLED
HAHA, SORRY

* At the time, roughly 575 USD.


EH, IF YOU REALLY LOOK THERE'S CHEAPER
I STILL MAKE DO WITH PART-TIME JOBS, MAN WAY OUTSIDE MY PRICE RANGE
Crappier than this but still

SHIT, DUDE, YOU'RE STILL GOING WITH THOSE?
WHAT ABOUT GETTING A REAL JOB?
NOT GONNA DO IT
MADE UP YOUR MIND, EH?
WHAT'S YOSHINO THINK ABOUT THIS?
HAVEN'T TOLD HER, SO I DUNNO
BUT I KINDA GET THE FEELING SHE ALREADY KNOWS...
BUT YEAH, THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT
I REALIZED LATELY THAT GETTING A JOB DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE AUTOMATICALLY TRUSTWORTHY, ANYWAY
OH, IZZAT SO

SO WHAT, YOU'RE GONNA BE A HOUSE HUSBAND?
YUP, THAT'S ME!
I'M THINKING, I'LL DO ALL THE HOUSE-WORK
EVEN I'M NOT THAT BOLD
Or maybe it's just being timid
YOU'RE GONNA MOOCH OFF OF HER?
AND ONCE YOSHINO BECOMES A LAWYER IT AIN'T LIKE WE'LL BE SHORT ON MONEY
I'LL MAKE HEALTHY MEALS FOR US EVERY DAY,
DO THE DISHES, LAUNDRY, CLEAN UP THE HOUSE, YOU NAME IT
DUDE
AND I DON'T THINK SHE WANTS TO HAVE KIDS EITHER
YOSHINO'S HAPPY CHASING HER DREAM RIGHT NOW, SO I'LL JUST STAY WITH HER AND BE HER SUPPORT.

YOU'RE BASICALLY SAYING YOU'RE GONNA RELY ON YOSHINO FOR EVERY-THING
IF YOU TWO GET MARRIED AND SHE DIES BEFORE YOU DO, YOU'RE FUCKED, MAN
YEAH
GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT
SO HOW'S COMPANY LIFE? HOW'RE YOU MANA-GING?
HUH?
WELL, I DUNNO FEELS LIKE I'VE ONLY JUST GOTTEN USED TO BEING A CORPORATE DRONE
I NEVER THOUGHT IT'D BE LIKE THIS BACK WHEN I WAS IN SCHOOL MOUNTAINS OF WORK, EVERY DAY

I'D NEVER BE ABLE TO EVEN DREAM ABOUT GOING OUT ON A WEEKDAY LIKE YOU'RE DOING
LIKE
YEAH, I CAN SEE THAT
I REMEMBER I USED TO JUST DOZE OFF DURING LECTURE AND SHIT
HAHAHA
MAN, IT'S ALL SO FAR AWAY FOR ME NOW
Y KNOW, I ONLY HAVE LECTURE ONCE A WEEK
SO WHAT BRINGS YOU TO TOKYO, ANYWAY?
WELL, WHAT HAPPENED WAS
TECHNI-CALLY?
SO DID YOU?
WELL TECHNICALLY, YEAH
OBVIOUS AIN'T IT?
I CAME TO SEE YOSHINO

HOLY SHIT, DUDE!
YOU JUST KICKED HIM? SERIOUSLY?
SERIOUSLY
I MEAN, IT AIN'T LIKE HE CALLED THE COPS OR ANY-THING,
BUT IT SURE PUT A STOP TO ANY CHANCE OF SPIRITING YOSHINO AWAY FOR A ROMANTIC NIGHT ON THE TOWN
WELL, DUH
SOUNDS LIKE A SCENE FROM A COMEDY MOVIE
TELL ME ABOUT IT
I MEAN, YEAH IT BOTHERS ME WE DIDN'T GET TO SLEEP TOGETHER OR WHATEVER,
BUT THE BIG THING IS THAT WE DIDN'T HAVE THE CHANCE TO REALLY TALK ABOUT OUR PROBLEMS
WHAT NOW?

IT JUST WASN'T SATISFYING
LIKE WE ONLY TOLD EACH OTHER THE BARE MINIMUM NEEDED TO GET BY
I GUESS WHAT I MEAN IS, I FELT REALLY EMPTY AFTER I LEFT
HMM
AND WHAT ELSE?
I WANTED TO CHAT WITH HER ABOUT STUFF THAT DIDN'T REALLY MATTER,
BUT WE JUST DIDN'T HAVE THE TIME
I GUESS THAT'S KINDA TOUGH TO DO
Y'KNOW, WHEN WE'RE LIVING APART LIKE THIS AND ALL
I REMEMBER WHEN WE WERE BACK IN KISARAZU, IT FELT LIKE WE HAD ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD
YOU JUST DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME TOGETHER WITH HER EH?
YEAH

AND YOU KNOW WHAT BOTHERS ME EVEN MORE THAN THAT?
IT'S THAT I DIDN'T REALIZE THAT AT ALL UNTIL SHE'D ALREADY LEFT
WELL,THAT'S JUST WHAT PEOPLE'RE LIKE, YEAH? IT'S NATURAL NOT TO NOTICE TIME SPENT APART.
NAH, IT FEELS LIKE SHIT
THAT'S WHY I
I MIGHT NOT NOTICE IT, BUT THAT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT IT EXISTS
HUH YEAH, I CAN SEE THAT
THAT'S WHY YOU ..?
WELL, I MEAN
I ..
I WANNA
MAKE A FAMILY WITH YOSHINO

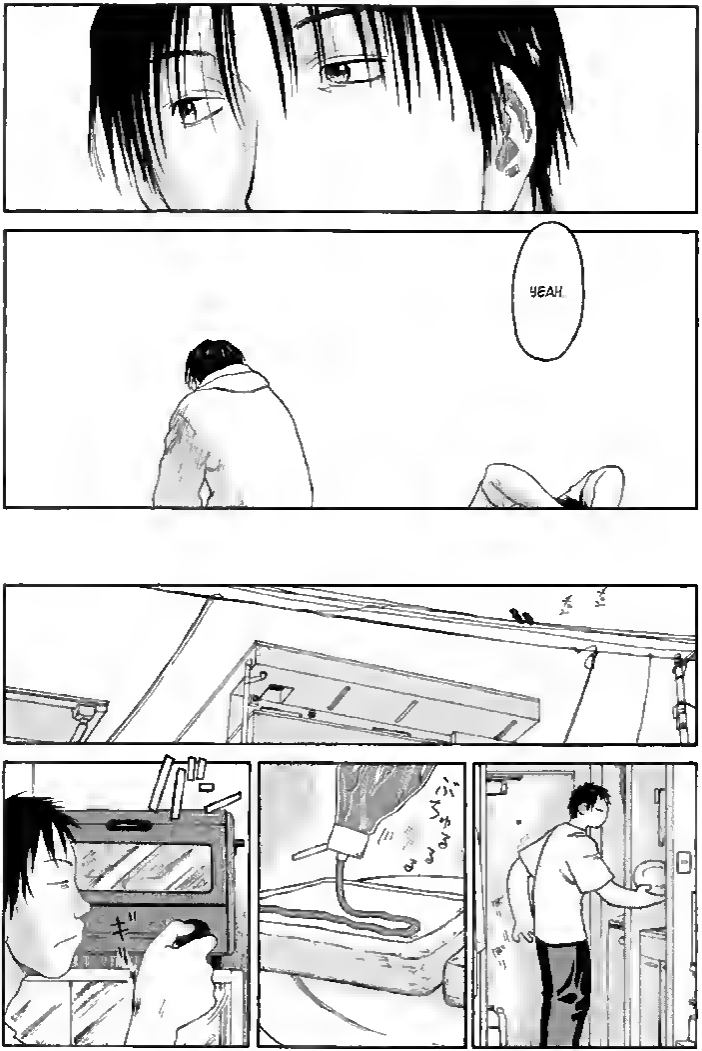
ERR WELL, Y KNOW
THE HELL DID THAT COME FROM?
Family?
IT DOESN'T NECESSARILY HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH BLOOD RELATION
"FAMILY" IS A PRETTY FUNNY WORD, AIN'T IT?
SO YOU JUST WANNA MARRY HER, IS WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?
EEEHH
IF YOU'RE LIVING TOGETHER UNDER ONE ROOF AND THE SITUATION'S RIGHT, YOU'RE ALREADY A FAMILY
SORT OF I DON'T REALLY CARE ABOUT THE TECHNICAL SIDE OF IT
SO WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS YOU DON'T NECESSARILY WANT TO GET MARRIED, YOU JUST WANNA LIVE WITH HER?
HRRM
I dunno whether you're talking fantasy or reality
I THINK WHAT REALLY MAKES A FAMILY A FAMILY IS THE WAY YOU SHARE SOMEONE'S DAILY LIFE

THAT'S WHY YOU SAID "FAMILY" THEN.
HUH? OH, I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN
WELL, NAH, JUST LIVING TOGETHER MEANS YOU KINDA HAVE TO BE APART FROM OTHER PEOPLE, Y'KNOW?
YUP I THINK THAT MEETING YOSHINO HERE IN TOKYO
Mmph
REALLY MADE ME START THINKING ABOUT THIS SORTA THING
ぐぐっ
I LOVE YOSHINO, YOU KNOW?
AND BE-SIDES
OVER IN KOKU-BUNJI
AH, RIGHT
WHERE WAS IT AGAIN?
CUZ HER FAMILY LIVES NEARBY, RIGHT?
IT'S HER FAMILY, THE PLACE SHE GREW UP IN,
THE PEOPLE AND PLACES AROUND HER DURING HER CHILD-HOOD, RIGHT?
AND I GOT TO THINKING, WHAT MADE YOSHINO INTO THE PERSON I LOVE RIGHT NOW?

SO IF I CAN MARRY HER, I THINK THAT'D BE THE BEST CHOICE
AND I'D TRY AND GET ALONG WITH HER PARENTS AND HER SIBS
Individuality only really has meaning when compared to a greater whole
AND I CAN'T JUST TELL HER TO CUT OFF ALL THOSE TIES AND DENY ALL OF THAT
YOU KNOW...
WELL, NO, NOT REALLY I MEAN, I'M ROOTING FOR YOU AND ALL
YOU THINK IT'S THAT BAD?
SOUNDS LIKE THE KINDA THING A POLITICIAN COULD WRITE A BOOK ABOUT TO HELP THEIR CAMPAIGN
YEAH, YEAH, I KNOW
I THINK THOSE MIGHT BE THE MOST WHOLESOME WORDS EVER TO COME OUT OF YOUR MOUTH
BORING, AIN'T IT

I'M NOT SAYING I WANNA BE THE MAIN CHARACTER IN SOME TV DRAMA OR ANYTHING...
BUT I THINK THIS'D WORK JUST FINE FOR ME
...THIS IS THE KINDA THING I WAS THINKING ABOUT WHILE I WAITED FOR YOU AT THE NORTH EXIT OF MITAKA
I WISH I HAD YOUR FREE TIME
IT'S KINDA IMPRESSIVE HOW YOU HAVEN'T MANAGED TO ACTUALLY SOLVE A SINGLE REAL LIFE PROBLEM YET, TOO
YUP
I JUST THINK IT'S MORE IMPORTANT TO CHANGE MY WAY OF THINKING BEFORE I DO ANYTHING
MAN IT MUST BE GOOD STILL BEING A STUDENT
HAVING TIME FOR IDLE CONTEMPLATION LIKE THAT AND ALL
YEAH, IT MIGHT NOT AMOUNT TO ANYTHING, I KNOW
HAHA

SORRY FOR DROPPING IN ON YOU LIKE THIS
YOU SHOULD BE NAOKO WAS GONNA MAKE BREAK-FAST FOR ME IN THE MORNING AND EVERYTHING
ANYWAY, I HAVE WORK TOMORROW, SO I HAVE TO GET SOME SLEEP
OH
YEAH
I'VE GOTTEN USED TO IT ALREADY
YOU'RE REALLY BUSY, HUH


YEAH.
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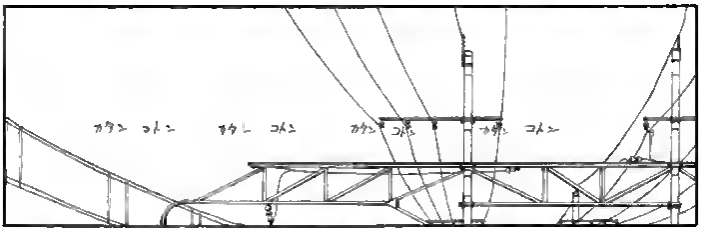
Grmph...
HEY
IT'S MORNING
TIME TO WAKE UP
BUH?
WHUH
WHAT TIME IS IT?
PAST SEVEN
'S WAY TOO EARLY TO GET UP
YEAH, WELCOME TO MY LIFE
LOOKIN' SHARP, MISTER IRUMA
YEAH, YEAH, FUCK YOU TOO

THE TRAINS'RE PACKED RIGHT NOW
YOU SHOULD KILL SOME TIME AROUND HERE BEFORE YOU GO
ガヤ～
THAT BAD?
THAT BAD
SO AROUND WHEN'S A GOOD TIME?
HRRM PAST TEN AT THE LEAST
THAT'S LIKE TWO HOURS FROM NOW.
BETTER'N GETTING PANCAKED
See ya.
NOT LIKE YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO DO ANYWAY.
I GUESS

OKAY
SO FIRST I'LL GO TO A CORNER STORE FOR A BIT
WHAT THEN?
I'M HERE, MIGHT AS WELL HAVE FUN IN TOKYO
NAH, NOT REALLY IN THE MOOD
MAYBE I COULD DROP BY HOME
SAKURA'S JUST ONE STOP FROM TOKYO IF YOU GO BY EXPRESS
SHIT, WAIT, I HAVE A SHIFT TONIGHT
HAVE TO GET BACK BY THEN

IT WAS A LONG NIGHT...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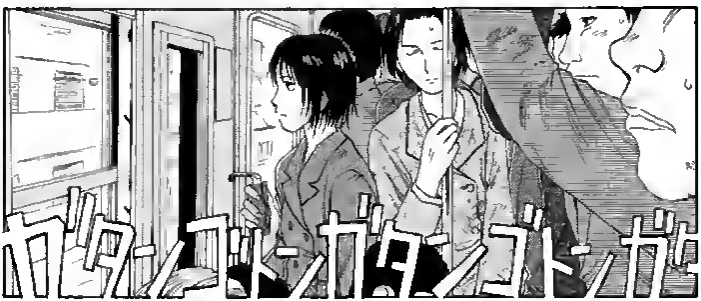
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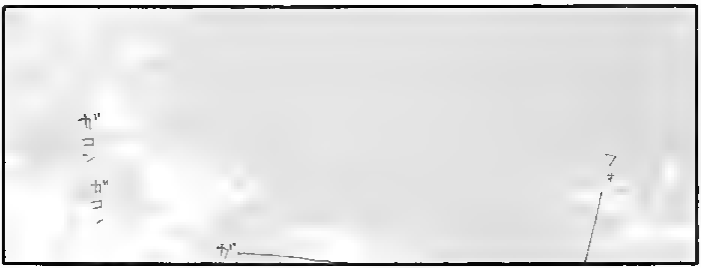
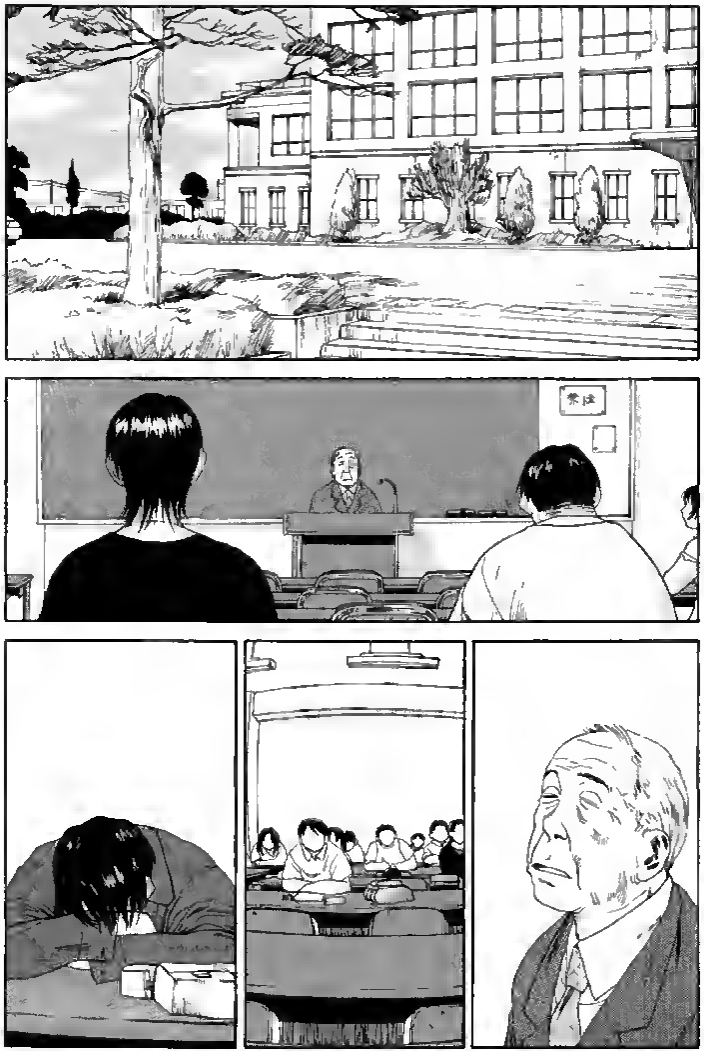
NEXT TIME...
I'LL HAVE TO TRY AND NOT BE SO MEAN TO HIM

...I WONDER IF MR KURAHASHI'S GONNA MAKE IT TO WORK TODAY...

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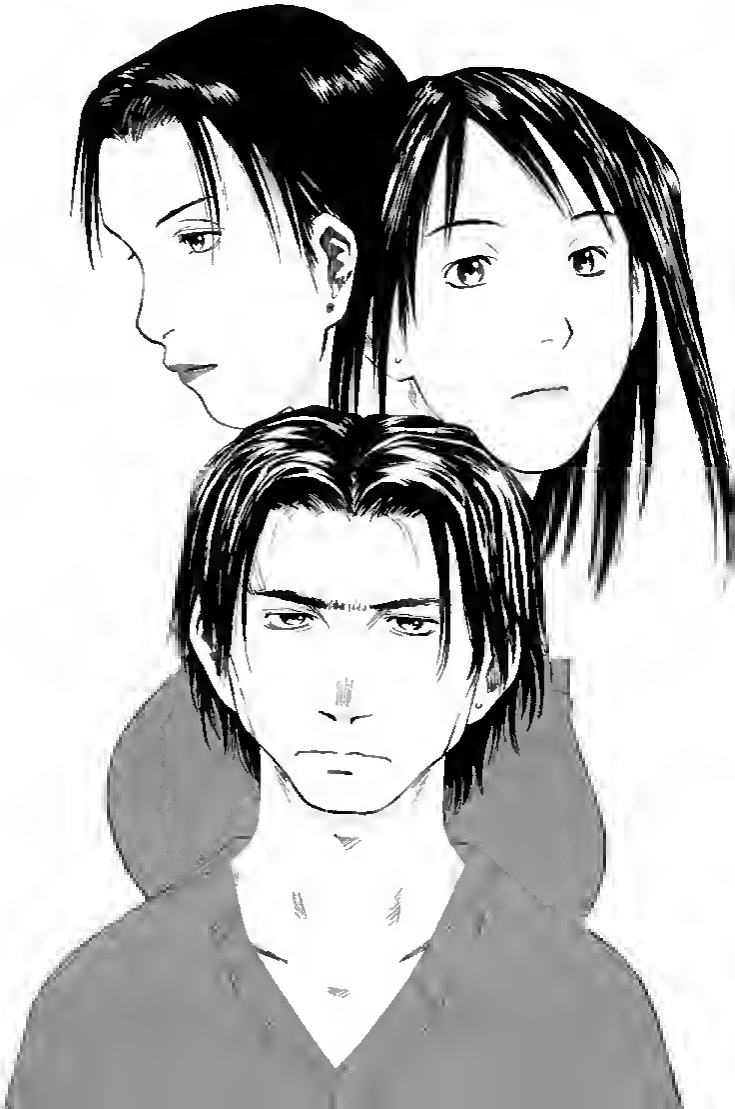
SHIMA
CAN WE TALK FOR A SECOND?

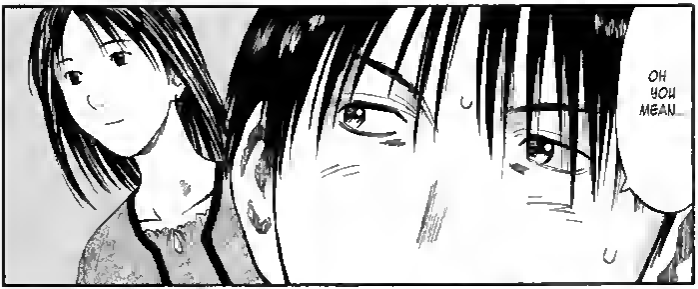
Chapter 9 - Calling, Waiting, Eavesdropping I



I'LL JUST HAVE SOME COFFEE
DO YOU WANT MILK OR LEMON WITH THAT?
HMM ICED TEA FOR ME
MHMM
JUST THE TEA'S FINE, THANKS
NAH, I THINK I'LL PAY FOR MY OWN STUFF DON'T LIKE OWING YOU SOMETHING
I'M BUYING, YOU KNOW, SO YOU CAN GO FOR SOMETHING MORE EXPENSIVE IF YOU WANT

SO
I KNOW YOU DRAGGED ME OUT HERE 'CAUSE YOU WANT SOMETHING FROM ME
SO LET'S HEAR IT.
HEH... YEAH, OKAY
WELL I MEAN, SO, LIKE, IT'S NOTHING, REALLY WELL, NO, I GUESS IT'S NOT NOTHING
WELL IT'S UMM
THIS'S GONNA SOUND REALLY WEIRD...
I GUESS IT IS REALLY WEIRD, COME TO THINK OF IT
HMM
SO, UHH, ANYWAY
I WAS JUST WONDERING, I GUESS UMM YOU REMEMBER HONDA?
WOULD YOU, ERR, THINK ABOUT GOING OUT WITH HER?
ANYWAY
ハラン

THE FUCK?
ぐぐぐ…
WHAT'D YOU JUST SAY?
HOLD ON A SEC.
HONDA? GO OUT WITH HER?
WHAT'RE YOU EVEN TALKING ABOUT?
I GUESS IT'S KINDA WEIRD, ISN'T IT...
HEHEH...
AH...
YEAH


OH YOU MEAN...

DIDN'T SEE THAT ONE COMING
WAIT, THEN WHY'D SHE GET ALL FRIENDLY WITH ME BACK THEN?
I THOUGHT YOSHIMURA WAS THE ONE WHO WAS INTERESTED IN ME...
HER?!
HOLD ON... MAYBE IT'S BOTH OF 'EM?!

SO THAT'S WHAT YOU WERE GONNA ASK ME
HUH
UHH
HMM I SEE

SLOW DOWN A LITTLE
WHOA, WHOA
SO WHAT DO YOU SAY?
NO, THAT'S NOT IT
YEAH.
SO HONDA ASKED YOU TO ASK ME?
SO YOU'RE SAYING HONDA IS INTO ME?
I'M DOING THIS BEHIND HER BACK
WELL, BASICALLY.
HUH?

THE ICED TEA?
SOMETHING FEELS SUSPICIOUS ABOUT THIS
WAIT, WAIT
WHY WOULD YOU-
WAIT, NO FIRST THINGS FIRST, I'M GONNA MAKE THIS CLEAR
REALLY?
...
ふぅ

I'M NOT GONNA DATE HONDA
LET'S START FROM THERE, OKAY?
ERR
WHY
WHY'RE YOU ASKING ME TO DO THIS ANYWAY?!
ARE YOU SURE? COULDN'T YOU JUST MAYBE-
DAMMIT! SHUT UP FOR A SECOND AND LISTEN!
I CAN'T ANSWER THAT QUES-TION
UGH
SOME-THING STINKS HERE

I MEAN, ISN'T IT ENOUGH THAT HONDA IS INTERES-TED IN YOU?
WELL...
UNLESS YOU LET ME KNOW WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON
WE CAN'T TALK THINGS OUT...
HAHA, OF COURSE NOT I'M JUST A SUPPORTING CHARACTER...
What is wrong with this guy
WHAT, D'YOU THINK YOU'RE THE MAIN CHARACTER IN SOME ROMANCE DRAMA? CUT IT OUT WITH THE CORNY LINES
SERI-OUSLY?
I UNDERSTAND YOU PROBABLY GAVE THIS A LOT OF THOUGHT BEFORE YOU CAME TO ME
LOOK, MAN...

THERE'S NO WAY YOU COULD THINK UP A SOLUTION FOR THIS SHIT ALL BY YOURSELF
BUT WHAT YOU'RE ASKING FOR DOESN'T INVOLVE JUST YOU
I CAN'T TRUST ANYTHING YOU SAY IF YOU'RE GONNA BE THIS STUPID
IF YOU HONESTLY THOUGHT THINGS WOULD GO LIKE YOU IMAGINED, YOU NEED TO GROW UP
THIS FUCKER
BUT I'M STILL NOT TALKING
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, THEN SO BE IT

SHIT, WAIT
I WAS ABOUT TO RESORT TO VIO-LENCE AGAIN!
Do I need anger manage-ment?
HE KEEPS REMINDING ME OF MYSELF WITH ALL THE DUMB SHIT HE SAYS
There was that time I grabbed Yoshino by the collar come to think of it
IT PISSES ME OFF
GUESS I STILL HAVE SOME GROW-ING UP TO DO, MYSELF
DIDN'T I SAY I WASN'T TALKING?
WELL? SAY SOME-THING
HOLY SHIT, THIS MOTHER-FUCKER
WHAT ARE YOU, A FUCKIN' FIVE-YEAR-OLD?!
LOOK
C'mon, handle it maturely
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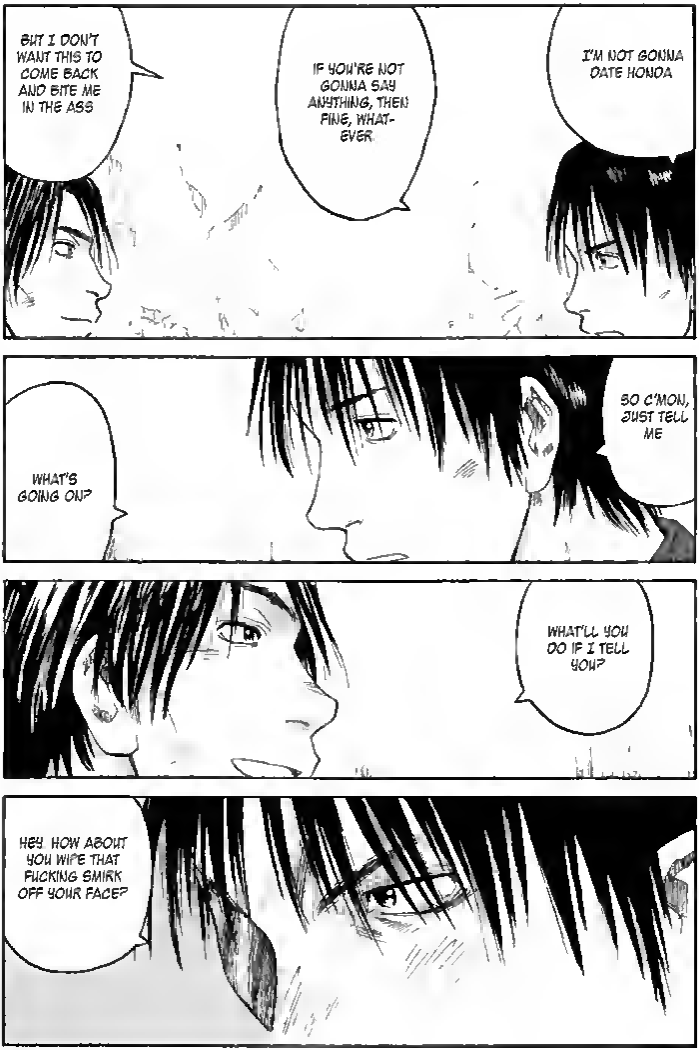
I'M NOT GONNA DATE HONDA
IF YOU'RE NOT GONNA SAY ANYTHING, THEN FINE, WHATEVER
BUT I DON'T WANT THIS TO COME BACK AND BITE ME IN THE ASS
SO C'MON, JUST TELL ME
WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHAT'LL YOU DO IF I TELL YOU?
HEY HOW ABOUT YOU WIPE THAT FUCKING SMIRK OFF YOUR FACE?

Can't you tell
I'm serious
you little shit?
Don't fuckin joke
around with me

I'VE GOT PROB-LEMS
PHWUCK, I WENT BACK TO BULLYING PEOPLE AROUND
I'LL KNOCK IT OFF
SORRY
DAMN, LOOK AT HIM
I POPPED HIM LIKE A BALLOON
YEAH, SOMETHING'S DEFINITELY WRONG HERE
Something smells fishy

HONDA LIKES YOU. I'M NOT LYING ABOUT THAT ONE.
SO, I GUESS I'LL START AT THE BEGINNING
HMM
Kinda embarrassing to hear
AND
I KINDA HAVE A THING FOR HER, ACTUALLY
AND, WELL,
HUH.
AND?
YEAH?

WELL, THERE'S MORE I'M NOT DONE YET
OKAY?
MMM?
SO HOW'D THAT LEAD TO THIS?
SO, UHH,
TURNS OUT YOSHIMURA LIKES ME A LOT
OOOOKAY
UH HUH
SO I'M GUESSING THAT'S IT FOR THE CREDIT ROLL?
Haha. I'm blushing
DAMN, REALLY?
ERR NOT THAT I'M DISAPPOINTED OR ANYTHING

SO, WELL,
I WAS THINKING OF GETTING TOGETHER WITH YOSHIMURA
BUT YOU FEEL SORRY TO HONDA FOR FESTERING HER ALL THIS TIME,
SO YOU'RE TRYING TO HOOK HER UP WITH ME?
Is that it?
YEAH
THAT'S PRETTY MUCH IT
YOU'RE FUCKING CRAZY, MAN
THERE'S THIS GIRL YOSHINO REMEMBER HER?
YOU'RE PRETTY MUCH ASKING ME TO CHEAT ON HER RIGHT NOW, YOU REALIZE THAT?
WELL I DON'T MEAN IT LIKE THAT, REALLY
I WAS JUST HOPING YOU MIGHT JUST TRY IT OUT, KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
WAS IT THAT DUMB?

SOMETHING STILL DOESN'T FIT HERE
WHY D'YOU CARE SO MUCH ABOUT GETTING HER A GUY?
IF SHE'S NOT INTERESTED IN YOU, THEN JUST LEAVE IT. DON'T CONCERN YOURSELF WITH HER
YOU DON'T GET ANYTHING FOR BEING NICE TO HER, YOU KNOW
FINE, I'M DROPPING IT
LOOKS LIKE YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT HER ARE PRETTY COMPLICATED,
AND IT'S NOT LIKE I WANNA HEAR THAT SHIT ANYWAY
UHH...

REALLY?
I MEAN, IT'S NOT LIKE HEARING YOUR SOB STORY'S GONNA CHANGE MY MIND ON THIS EITHER WAY
BUT...
MAYBE I'M JUST GETTING AHEAD OF MYSELF HERE...
SHE REALLY DOES LIKE YOU A LOT.
BUT I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW
I'M NOT GONNA LOSE ANY SLEEP OVER IT
It's kinda impressive how you can say shit like that with a straight face
YEAH, I HEARD YOU THE FIRST TIME YOU SAID IT

SHE SAYS IT WAS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT
I DON'T THINK WE'VE EVER EVEN TALKED TO EACH OTHER...
WHAT'S SHE SEE IN ME ANYWAY?
HELL NO IT MEANS SHE'S ONLY INTERESTED IN ME FOR MY LOOKS
WHAT? ISN'T THAT GREAT?
THAT KINDA SHIT NEVER PANS OUT
Wait she told you that?
WELP, THAT CLINCHES IT.
HOW CAN YOU JUST FALL FOR SOMEONE YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW THAT WELL?
I DON'T GET IT, PERSONALLY

I DUNNO, IT JUST FEELS LIKE A RELATION-SHIP BASED ON THAT LEADS TO SEX AND NOTHING ELSE
WELL, YEAH, BUT THAT WAS IN LIKE HIGH SCHOOL...
YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE, AT LEAST ONCE
YOU'VE NEVER DONE THAT BEFORE?
I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER HOW WE FIRST MET ANYMORE
WELL, WE STARTED OUT AS JUST FRIENDS
SO HOW'D YOU MEET SOMA?
THEY SAY THAT LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT ACTUALLY HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH REACTIONS ON THE DNA LEVEL
BUT HEY
ISN'T THAT, UHH, BAD?
EH, IT'S PROBABLY THE SAME FOR HER TOO
SO IN OTHER WORDS, IT'S AN INSTINCTIVE THING THAT DRIVES US TO PRODUCE BETTER OFFSPRING
I HEARD THAT CHILDREN FROM COUPLES WHO MEET LIKE THAT TURN OUT SMARTER ON AVERAGE

AND SAYING FOR A SECOND THAT IT'S TRUE, THAT'D MEAN THAT ME AND YOSHINO'RE BIOLOGICALLY INCOMPATIBLE
ERR WELL, NO, I GUESS IT MIGHT BE
YEAH, I DUNNO ABOUT THAT
YOU SURE THAT'S NOT JUST BULL-SHIT SOMEONE MADE UP?
BUT NOW WE'RE REGRESSING AS CIVILIZED VALUES START TO RE-GRESS. MAYBE THAT'S TOO PRETENTIOUS
Wait does that mean horny middle schoolers are closer to being right about relationships
OR MAYBE IT MEANS THAT MAN EVOLVED FAST CHOOSING MATES SOLELY ON INSTINCT AND USED REASON INSTEAD,
SHE REALLY DOES LIKE YOU
WELL, I JUST MEAN,
DO YOU REALLY WANNA MAKE IT THAT CLEAR THAT HONDA LIKES ME OR SOME-THING?
SO WHY'D YOU BRING IT UP THEN?
I... I DON'T THINK IT WAS MEANT THAT WAY
RIGHT?

...WHAT?
I WAS JUST REALLY CAUGHT OFF GUARD WHEN SHE STARTED CRYING WHILE WE WERE FUCKING
WELL, THING IS,
C'MON, I CAN TELL THERE'S MORE
IS THERE SOMETHING ELSE YOU WANNA SAY?
WHAT?

AND THEN SHE SAYS TO ME, "I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO LOVE YOU LIKE I DO SHIMA."
SO WHAT THE HELL DO I HAVE TO SAY TO THAT?
I MEAN, I WAS THINKING, FUCK YEAH, I FINALLY GOT IN HER PANTS
I DUNNO. SEEING A GIRL'S TEARS FALLING ON MY CHEST JUST REALLY TOOK ME OUT OF THE MOOD
BUT THEN SHE JUST STARTS CRYING OUT OF NOWHERE, RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF DOING IT.
...HEY.
YOU SURE YOU WANNA TALK ABOUT THIS KINDA THING IN PUBLIC?
YOSHIMURA JUMPED MY BONES, SO...
AND AFTER THAT WE WENT BACK TO BEING JUST FRIENDS, I GUESS
Wait so her tears fell on him so she was on top?
Okay, I really didn't need to hear that
AND THEN JUST A LITTLE WHILE AFTER THAT

CHRIST, MAN, KEEP IT IN YOUR PANTS
WELL I MEAN, SHE JUST STARTED BLOWING ME, NOT LIKE THERE WAS MUCH I COULD DO
WHAT THE HELL, YOU LUCKY BASTARD
YOSHINO PRACTICALLY NEVER DOES THAT FOR ME
and she stops really fast even when she does
Shit now I'm hard
AND THEN WE PRETTY MUCH FUCKED ALL NIGHT
I'M A REALLY TERRIBLE PERSON, I KNOW
I'M STILL GOING AROUND PICKING UP GIRLS AND HAVING FLINGS WITH THEM WHILE ALL THIS IS GOING ON THOUGH I GUESS THEY'RE DOING THE SAME

IT'S NO USE TRYING TO TALK SENSE INTO HIM
THIS DUDE IS SERIOUSLY OBSESSED WITH PUTTING HIMSELF DOWN, ISN'T HE
THAT WAS A NICE STORY, BUT I'M STILL NOT DOING ANYTHING WITH HONDA,
SO HAVE FUN WITH THAT I GUESS
SO
WELL, YEAH, ANYWAY
ガ——

UGH...
WELL, AT LEAST THE SUN'S OUT
Wind's a little chilly though
SO, ERR, SORRY FOR BOTHERING YOU WITH THAT
UHH, YEAH, SURE, WHAT-EVER
ぴく

I HAVE TO WARN YOU, THOUGH, WE'RE ALL KINDA GOING CRAZY,
SO THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN

HAH HAHAH
STOP IT, YOU'RE SCARING ME NOW

UGH, NOW I'M TIRED
THE HELL WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?

I'D NEVER BE ABLE TO GO OUT AND PICK UP A GIRL FOR JUST A ONE NIGHT STAND...
IT'S LIKE WE HAVE TOTALLY OPPOSITE WAYS OF THINKING
HOW CAN PEOPLE BE SO DIFFER-ENT FROM EACH OTHER?
ALMOST FEELS LIKE HE LIVES IN ANOTHER WORLD OR SOMETHING
MAN, I DUNNO
AND THEN THERE'S THAT REALLY CHILDISH SIDE OF HIM TOO
WELL, I GUESS I DO UNDER-STAND THAT BIT ABOUT LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT A LITTLE...
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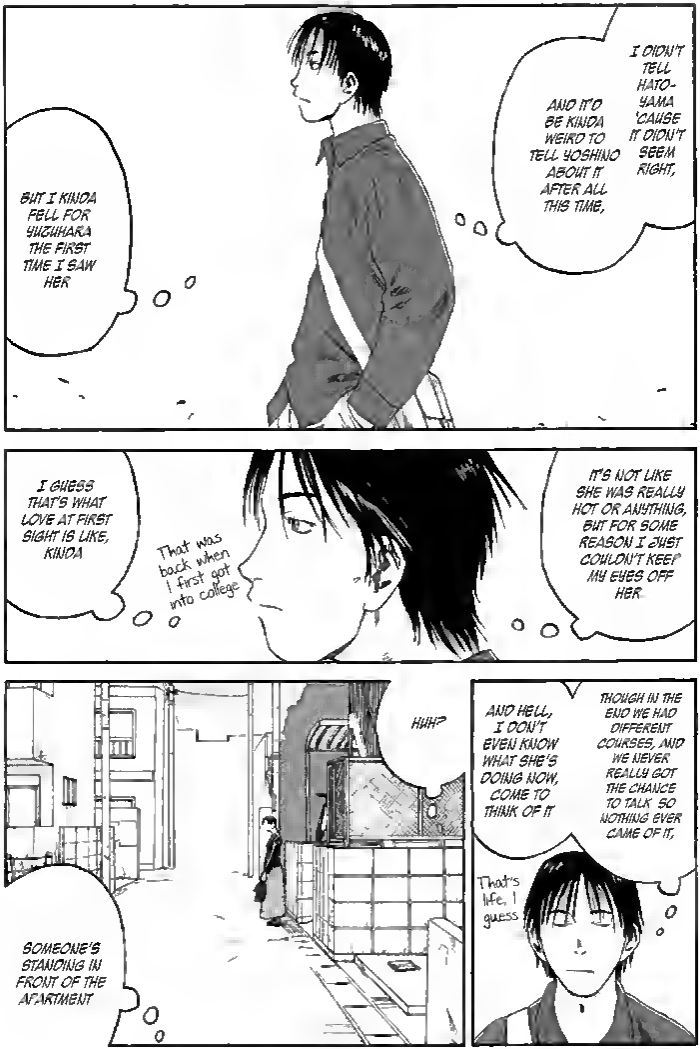
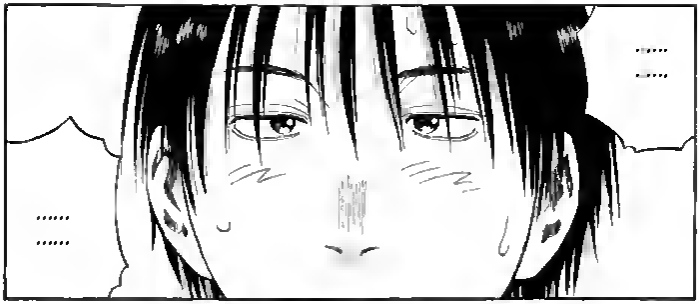

I DIDN'T TELL HATO-YAMA 'CAUSE IT DIDN'T SEEM RIGHT,
AND IT'D BE KINDA WEIRD TO TELL YOSHINO ABOUT IT AFTER ALL THIS TIME,
BUT I KINDA FELL FOR YUCHIHARA THE FIRST TIME I SAW HER
I GUESS THAT'S WHAT LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT IS LIKE, KINDA
That was back when I first got into college
IT'S NOT LIKE SHE WAS REALLY HOT OR ANYTHING, BUT FOR SOME REASON I JUST COULDN'T KEEP MY EYES OFF HER
SOMEONE'S STANDING IN FRONT OF THE APARTMENT
HUH?
AND HELL, I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT SHE'S DOING NOW, COME TO THINK OF IT
THOUGH IN THE END WE HAD DIFFERENT COURSES, AND WE NEVER REALLY GOT THE CHANCE TO TALK SO NOTHING EVER CAME OF IT,
That's life, I guess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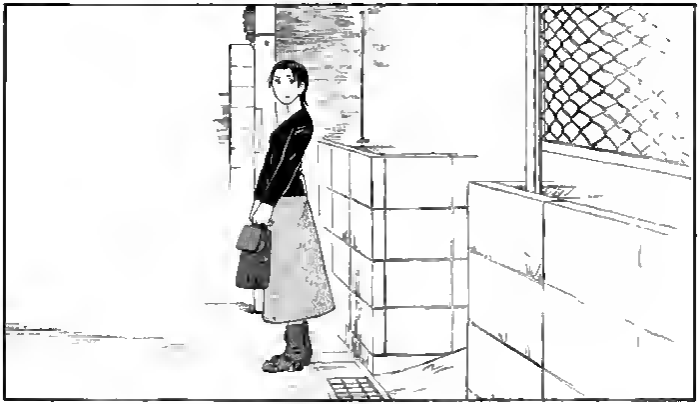

FIRST ONE OF THEM CALLS ME OUT TO RANT AT ME THEN ANOTHER'S WAITING IN FRONT OF MY PLACE?
CAN'T YOU LEAVE ME OUT OF WHATEVER CRAZY DRAMA YOU GUYS ARE HAVING?
BUT WAIT, WHY YOSHI-MURA?
And it's too late to turn around
SOME-BODY SAVE ME
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Chapter 9 - End

Chapter 10 - Calling, Waiting, Eavedropping II

I HAPPENED TO NOTICE HATOYAMA CALLING YOU FOR A TALK...
SO
OH, OKAY
AND?
IT KINDA FELT LIKE HE REALLY WANTED TO SAY SOMETHING
BUT IN THE END HE LEFT WITHOUT TELLING ME ANYTHING
HUH... IS THERE ANYTHING GOING ON BETWEEN YOU GUYS?
DID HE SAY ANYTHING STRANGE TO YOU?
HUH?

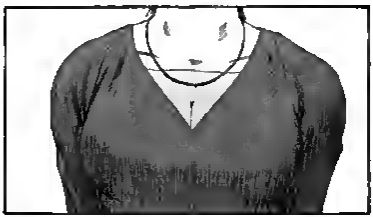
WELL, IN THAT CASE
NO
SO IS SOMETHING WRONG?
THERE'S STILL SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO SPEAK WITH YOU ABOUT
ACTUALLY,
WOULD YOU MIND IF WE WENT INSIDE TO TALK?
WELL, ACTUALLY, MY HOME'S KIND OF WHERE I GO TO GET AWAY FROM THINGS

WE CAN TAKE IT TO A CAFE OR SOMETHING IF YOU THINK IT'S GONNA TAKE A WHILE
I DON'T REALLY LIKE TALKING ABOUT SERIOUS STUFF AT HOME
SO I KINDA TEND TO RELAX WHEN I'M THERE

RIGHT

MAYBE I'M JUST SEEING THINGS?
BECAUSE OF WHAT HATOYAMA WAS SAYING EARLIER?
IS IT JUST ME, OR IS SHE DRESSED A LITTLE SEXY TODAY?

I CAN SEE HER CLEA-VAGE
Wow, she's BG



THE TRUTH IS,
HONDA ASKED ME TO COME AND TALK TO YOU.
WELL, I SUPPOSE WE CAN JUST TALK HERE, THEN
?!

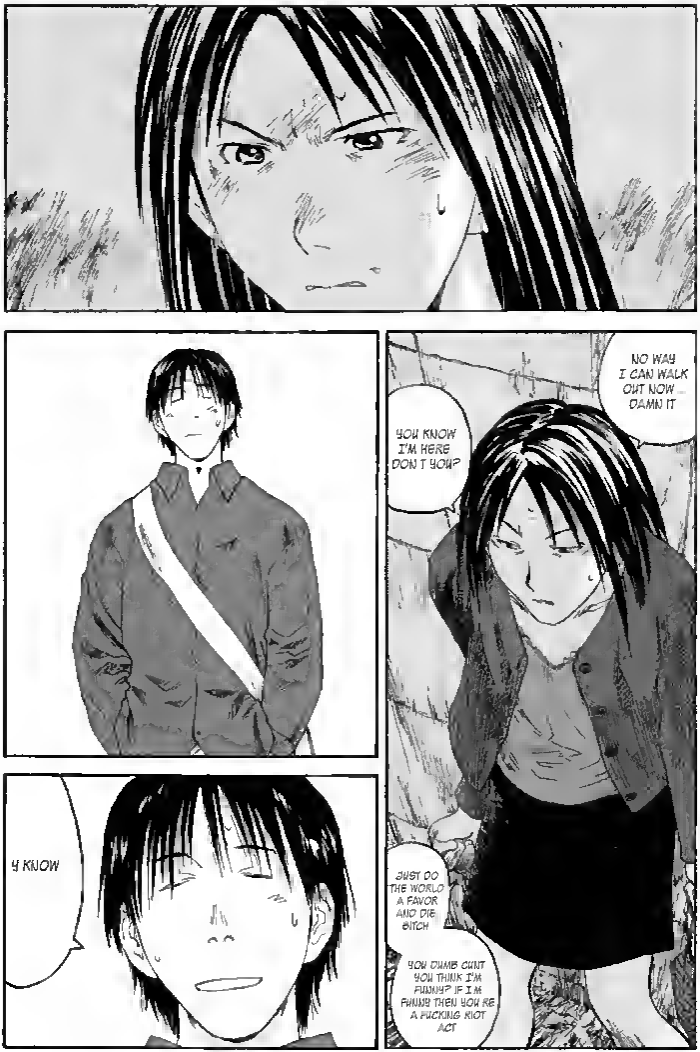
YEAH, HATOYAMA TALKED TO ME ABOUT THIS ALREADY
OH I THOUGHT THAT WAS THE CASE
THOUGH WITH HIM IT WASN'T BECAUSE HONDA ASKED HIM TO DO IT
TOTALLY HIS OWN DECISION

ACTUALLY, SHE DIDN'T ASK ME TO DO THIS, EITHER
...'SCUSE ME?
I WAS LYING
TO BE HONEST, I DON'T EVEN REALLY CARE ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT YOU GET TOGETHER WITH KAYA THAT'S HER NAME, BY THE WAY

LOOK AT THAT BITCH
HAH MAN
HATOYAMA SURE KNOWS HOW TO PICK 'EM, DOESN'T HE
A LIE FOR A LIE. RIGHT?
HATOYAMA'S TOTALLY THE TYPE TO RUIN HIMSELF IF YOU GIVE HIM THE CHANCE, SO I KNEW HE'D HAVE TOLD YOU
HAHAHA
WELL, NO I MEAN, JUST THE BASICS
SO HE TOLD YOU ABOUT US, TOO?
THEN THIS'LL BE EASIER TO EXPLAIN

HONESTLY, THE THREE OF US ARE A BIT OF A MESS RIGHT NOW.
IT'D BE BEST FOR YOU IF YOU DIDN'T GET INVOLVED
I COULD TELL THAT HATOYAMA WAS GOING TO DO SOMETHING STUPID SO I FIGURED I SHOULD MAKE SURE THINGS DIDN'T GET OUT OF HAND
YEAH YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT THAT ONE
IF YOU REALLY THOUGHT THAT,
SHOULDN'T YOU... I DUNNO. NOT BE STANDING HERE TALKING TO ME?

HONDA'S ACTUALLY A PRETTY FUNNY PERSON, YOU KNOW. THOUGH YOU WOULDN'T GUESS IT BY LOOKING
SHE WAS REALLY A MESS AROUND THE TIME WORD GOT OUT THAT YOU WERE GOING TO TAKE ANOTHER SEMESTER
YOU HEARD ALL ABOUT THAT, RIGHT?
CAN'T SAY I DID...
SHE WAS ALL SET TO GIVE UP ON YOU,
AND THEN JUST WHEN SHE'D GONE AND MOVED ON TO HER PLAN B, HATOYAMA, WELL, THINGS SUDDENLY CHANGED
BUT BY THEN THINGS HAD ALREADY GONE FAST THE POINT OF NO RETURN FOR THEM
...OR RATHER, THEY'D ALREADY GONE FAST THAT POINT, I SHOULD SAY
BUT THEN THAT FELL THROUGH TOO, AND NOW SHE'S JUST LOOKING TO MOVE IN ON SOMA'S TERRITORY AND GET HER CLAWS INTO YOU. FUNNY, ISN'T IT? SHE DIDN'T EVEN DARE APPROACH YOU WHEN SOMA WAS HERE, BUT NOW...

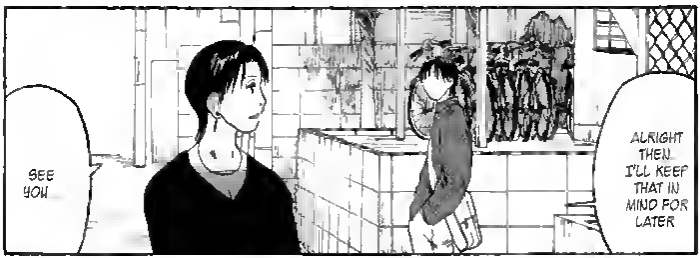

NO WAY I CAN WALK OUT NOW... DAMN IT
YOU KNOW I'M HERE DON'T YOU?
JUST DO THE WORLD A FAVOR AND DIE BITCH
YOU DUMB CUNT YOU THINK I'M FUNNY? IF I'M FUNNY THEN YOU'RE A FUCKING RIOT ACT
Y KNOW

YOU GUYS RE REALLY SOME-THING
OH, OF COURSE WE KNOW IT OURSELVES, BETTER THAN ANYONE
IT'S TOTALLY OUT OF OUR CONTROL AT THIS POINT
AND I HATE MYSELF FOR THE FACT THAT I CAN LOATHE ANOTHER HUMAN BEING THAT MUCH
HONDA'S VERY EXISTENCE MAKES ME SICK
AND THAT JUST MAKES ME HATE HER EVEN MORE
I'M SURE SHE FEELS THE SAME WAY
YOU'VE GOT THAT RIGHT

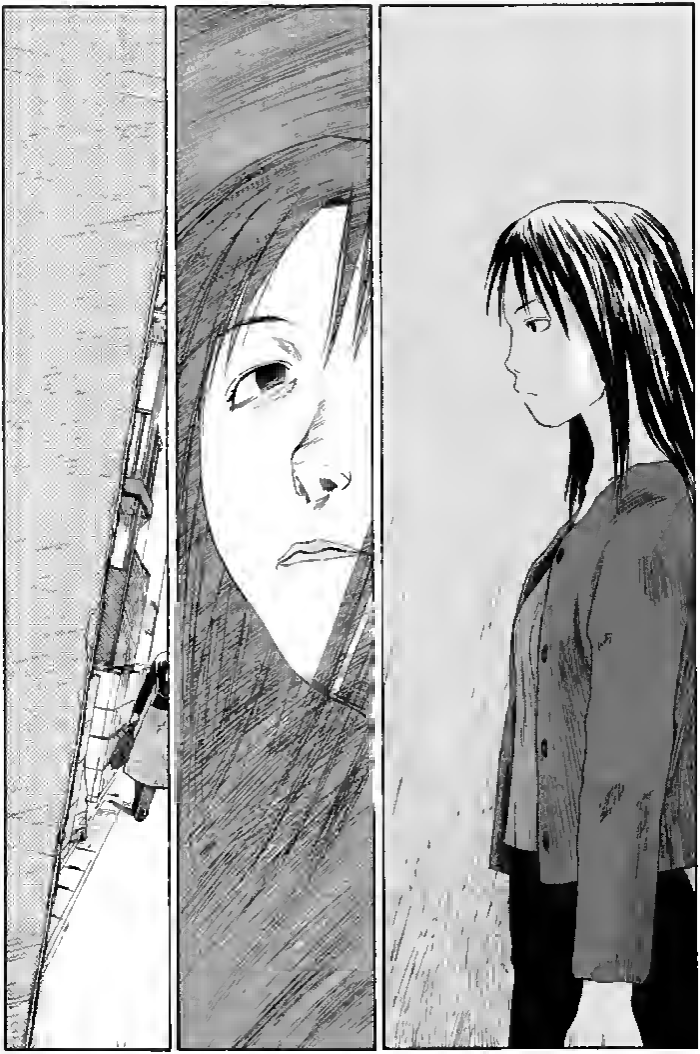
YOU'RE ONLY DOING THIS BECAUSE YOU HATE HONDA
What is wrong with you people
SO WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS,
SO THAT'S WHY I CAME HERE TODAY
TO WARN YOU AWAY FROM GETTING INVOLVED WITH US, FOR YOUR OWN GOOD
RIGHT
ANYWAY, I'LL BE GOING NOW
ERR YEAH
I'M SORRY WE HAD TO MEET LIKE THIS
OH, THAT'S RIGHT ONE LAST THING IT'S NOTHING TO DO WITH HONDA
HMM?

I REPEATED A YEAR BEFORE GETTING IN TO COLLEGE
It's a long story
SO I'M ACTUALLY THE SAME AGE AS YOU ARE

TO BE HONEST, IT KINDA GETS TO ME WHEN PEOPLE'RE TOO POLITE TO ME FEELS WEIRD
UHH SURE, I GUESS WHY NOT
SO WOULD YOU MIND IF I TONED THE POLITENESS DOWN A NOTCH?
AND NOW WE'RE IN THE SAME YEAR,


SEE YOU
ALRIGHT THEN. I'LL KEEP THAT IN MIND FOR LATER

AKIO.
Haha
Hah... haha

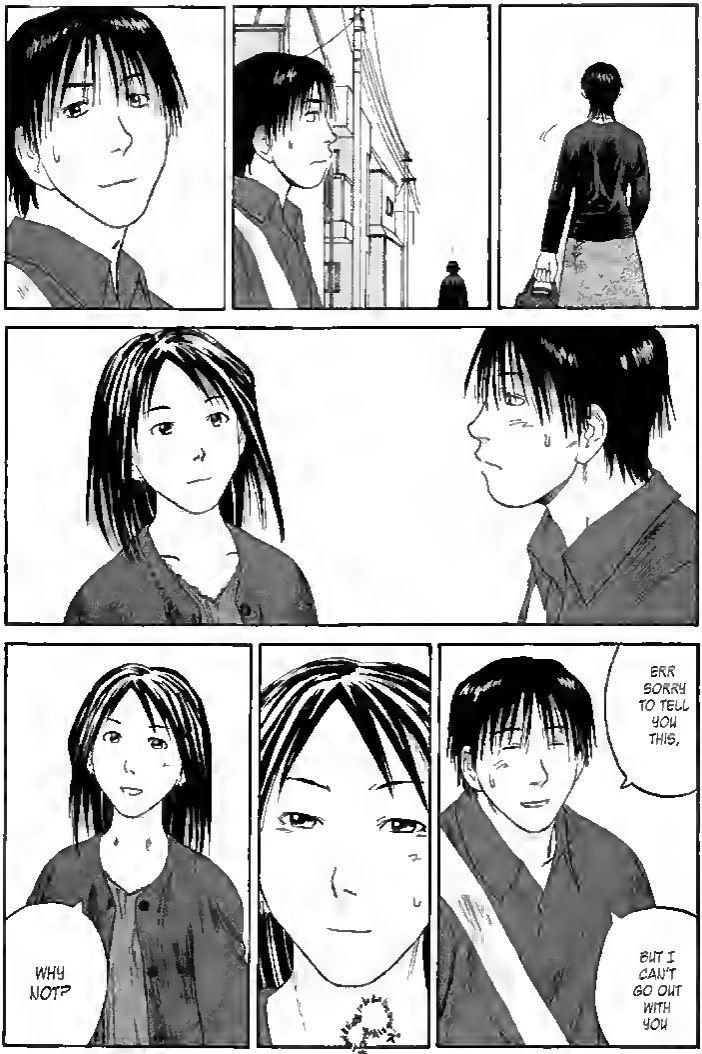


SHIMA!
SHIMA AKIO.
...WHA?

WHA?
WHAT?
HUH?
I knew she knew

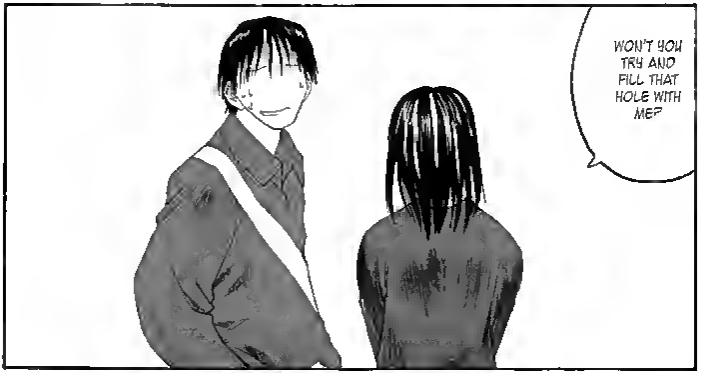
WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO OUT WITH ME?
SHIMA
CHRIST .
CAN THE TWO OF YOU JUST LEAVE ME OUT OF THIS..

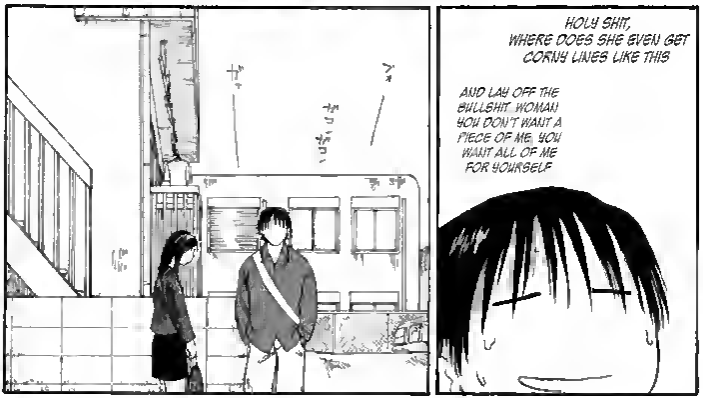
MAN... THESE TWO HATE EACH OTHER SO MUCH, IT DOESN'T EVER LET UP...
IT JUST KEEPS FEEDING ON ITSELF...


ERR SORRY TO TELL YOU THIS,
BUT I CAN'T GO OUT WITH YOU
WHY NOT?

C'MON... GIMME A BREAK HERE...
WELL... I MEAN, LET'S BE HONEST, I'M REALLY NOT ALL THAT GREAT
Right?
YOU REALLY ARE!
ERR... WELL, NO...
WHAT ELSE CAN YOU SAY TO A QUESTION LIKE THAT, DAMMIT...
AM I THAT ANNOYING TO YOU?
BUT YOU DON'T LIVE TOGETHER ANYMORE RIGHT?
I MEAN, YEAH...
HWH? WHH WELL
THEN IS IT BECAUSE OF SOMA?
AREN'T YOU LONELY NOW THAT SHE'S NOT HERE?
BUT...

I'M NOT SAYING I CAN MAKE IT ALL BETTER BUT EVEN IF IT'S JUST A LITTLE
I KNOW THERE'S GOT TO BE A HOLE SHE LEFT BEHIND IN YOUR HEART


WON'T YOU TRY AND FILL THAT HOLE WITH ME?


HOLY SHIT, WHERE DOES SHE EVEN GET CORNY LINES LIKE THIS
AND LAY OFF THE BULLSHIT, WOMAN! YOU DON'T WANT A PIECE OF ME, YOU WANT ALL OF ME FOR YOURSELF

YOU KNOW
.....
.....
NOT ALL PEOPLE ARE CREATED EQUAL
HUH?
IT'S JUST NOT EVEN WORTH COMPARING THE TWO OF YOU...
WHEN I LOOK AT YOU AND THEN THINK ABOUT YOSHINO,
WHAT I MEAN IS, THE WAY I SEE IT,
WHAT...?
UNDERSTAND WHAT I MEAN?
WELL HOW SHOULD I PUT IT

IT'S NO CONTEST. YOSHINO'S JUST BETTER IN EVERY WAY
WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS,
!!
THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT
THAT'S IT
COULD YOU GO OUT WITH ME THEN?
THEN WHAT IF YOU WEREN'T SEEING HER?

'CAUSE I DON'T BELIEVE IN LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT
Damn you're persistent
NAH, EVEN THEN, PROBABLY NOT.
HMM?
SO HATOYAMA TOLD YOU ABOUT THAT.
WHY?!
MAYBE AT THE START THAT'S ALL IT WAS.
MAY-BE
WELL, YEAH
I KNOW A LOT MORE ABOUT YOU THAN YOU THINK I DO!
BUT I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU FOR A LONG TIME NOW!

ERR MAYBE, BUT...
I have to get her off my ass somehow...
SO IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT SINCE THAT'S NOT WHAT'S DRIVING ME ANYMORE!
AND THAT'S WHY I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU NOW
THEN I'LL TEACH YOU...
YOU SAY YOU KNOW A LOT ABOUT ME BUT I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT YOU
..LOOK
So-
ANY THING YOU WANT TO KNOW
I CAN TELL YOU EVERY-THING
LOOK, WHAT I'M SAYING IS...
QUIT IT WITH THE "WHAT IF YOU WEREN'T" HYPOTHETICAL BULLSHIT I AM, SO NO!
I TOLD YOU, I'M DATING YOSHINO SO I'M NEVER GONNA GO OUT WITH YOU!

AND HELL THE WHOLE REASON YOU CAME OUT OF HIDING IN THE FIRST PLACE IS CAUSE YOU WANTED TO GIVE YOSHIMURA THE MIDDLE FIGNGER, RIGHT?
WAKE UP, THERE'S SOMETHING REALLY WRONG WITH YOU
HOW CAN I TRUST ANY-THING YOU SAY WHEN LIKE THE FIRST FUCKIN' THING YOU EVER TELL ME IS THAT YOU LOVE ME?
YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW SELF-CENTERED YOU LOOK WHEN YOU SAY YOU "LOVE" ME WHEN YOU DON'T CARE WHAT I THINK ABOUT THIS AT ALL?
Oooh
ボロボロボロ

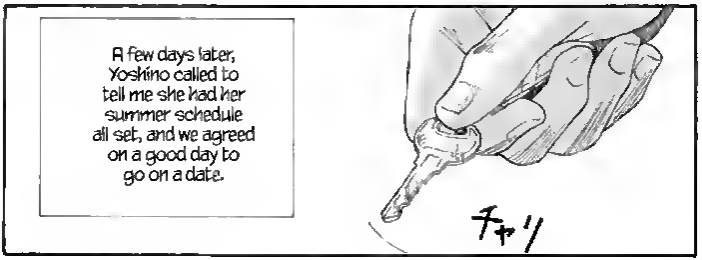
YOU'RE NOT NORMAL
If you don't stop I'm just gonna go home.
Hoo
Ooh
You want me to feel guilty right?
Huhh
Yeah I knew you'd start crying and it's really obvious you're doing it on purpose...
WHAT?
WHY WON'T YOU EVEN THINK ABOUT GOING OUT WITH ME?
WHY...
WHAT? HELL NO, OF COURSE NOT!
Dammit she's going for Yoshino now
IS SOMA BLACK-MAILING YOU OR SOME-THING?
I THOUGHT WE WENT OVER THIS ALREADY
HUH...?

I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING.
YOU'RE STRANGE
I CAN'T UNDERSTAND YOU
IF YOU CAN'T UNDER-STAND WHERE I'M COMING FROM,
YOU JUST FOOLED YOURSELF INTO THINK-ING YOU DO
YOU DON'T ACTUALLY KNOW ANY-THING ABOUT ME
THAT MEANS WE'D NEVER WORK OUT EVEN IF WE DID START DATING

BYE
THE END
I THINK WE'RE DONE HERE
YOU'RE CRAZY!

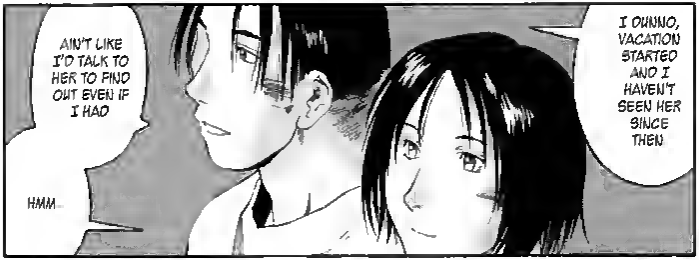
SHE EVEN LEAVES IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION YOSHIMURA DID
Damn that's some hate.

IS IT REALLY THAT WEIRD?


A few days later, Yoshino called to tell me she had her summer schedule all set, and we agreed on a good day to go on a date.

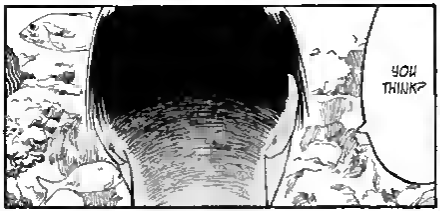
Chapter 11 - Objective

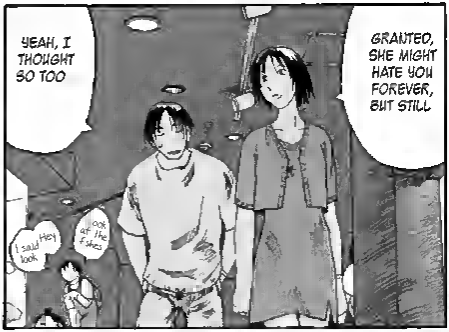
SO THEN WHAT?
DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO HER AFTER THAT?
HUH?
WELL?
OH.
YOU MEAN, HONDA?
HOW SHOULD I KNOW THAT? YOU JUST SAID "HER"!
WHO ELSE?
IT'S CALLED CONTEXT, AKIO

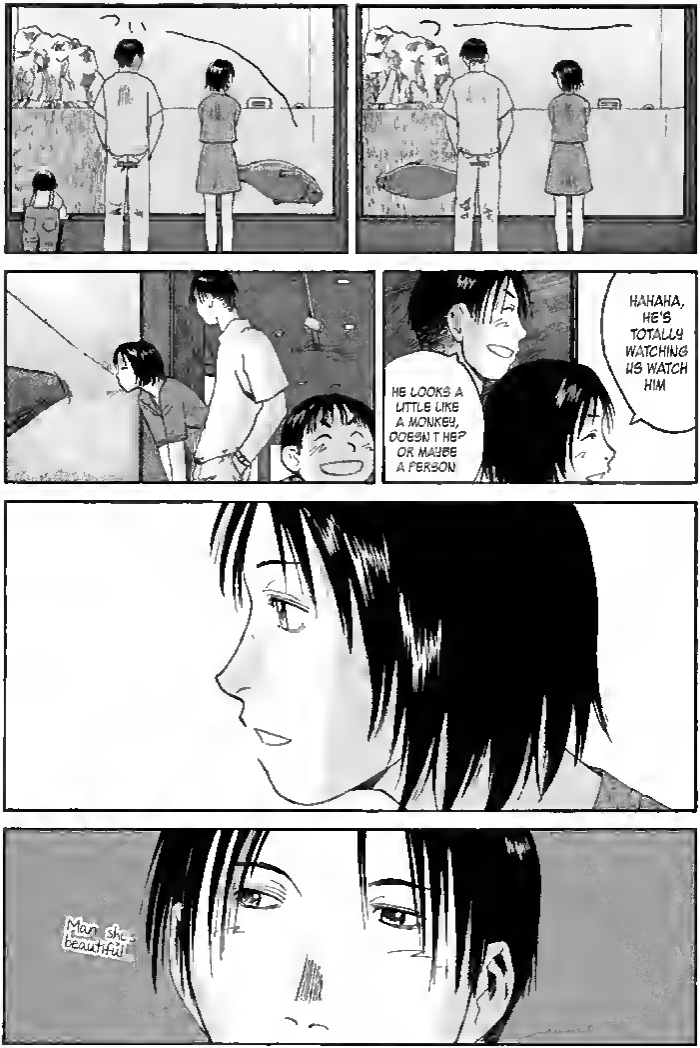

I DUNNO, VACATION STARTED AND I HAVEN'T SEEN HER SINCE THEN
AIN'T LIKE I'D TALK TO HER TO FIND OUT EVEN IF I HAD
HMM...

I THINK BEING BLUNT ABOUT IT WAS BETTER FOR HER TOO, IN THE LONG RUN...
YOU KNOW,

I guess sharks're pretty scary
Well yeah stingrays just look really creepy
but personally I really don't like stingrays
Get back here!


YOU THINK?


YEAH, I THOUGHT SO TOO
GRANTED, SHE MIGHT HATE YOU FOREVER, BUT STILL
I said look
Hey
look at the stars


HAHAHA, HE'S TOTALLY WATCHING US WATCH HIM
HE LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE A MONKEY, DOESN'T HE? OR MAYBE A PERSON
Man, she's beautiful!

4
TO BE HONEST, I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D BE TALKING WITH ANY-ONE...
HAH... WELL, YEAH
WHAT?
You're the one dating me.
DOES IT SURPRISE YOU?
PRETTY POPULAR WITH THE LADIES, AREN'T YOU, MR. SHIMA?
HEHEH
DON'T YOU GO CHEATING ON ME NOW
DON'T PRETEND YOU DIDN'T HEAR ME, WOMAN!
Eep!
Meh
Lucky dog
I said stop running!
WELL, Y'KNOW
I COULD USE SOME INCENTIVE TO STAY FAITHFUL, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN...

HMM
IT'S STILL JUST HALF PAST THREE
HRM...
WE'VE GOT SOME TIME TO KILL UNTIL THEN
It's so hot
WHAT SHOULD WE DO? YOU'RE GONNA GO HOME AFTER DINNER, RIGHT?
I WAS THINKING WE COULD GO SHOPPING FOR UMM CLOTHES OR SOMETHING...
OH, RIGHT, YOU NEED A SUIT, YEAH? SURE WE COULD GO DO THAT
OH, ACTUALLY
Ah
HMM YOU'RE RIGHT
I WONDER IF THERE'S ANYTHING WE COULD DO

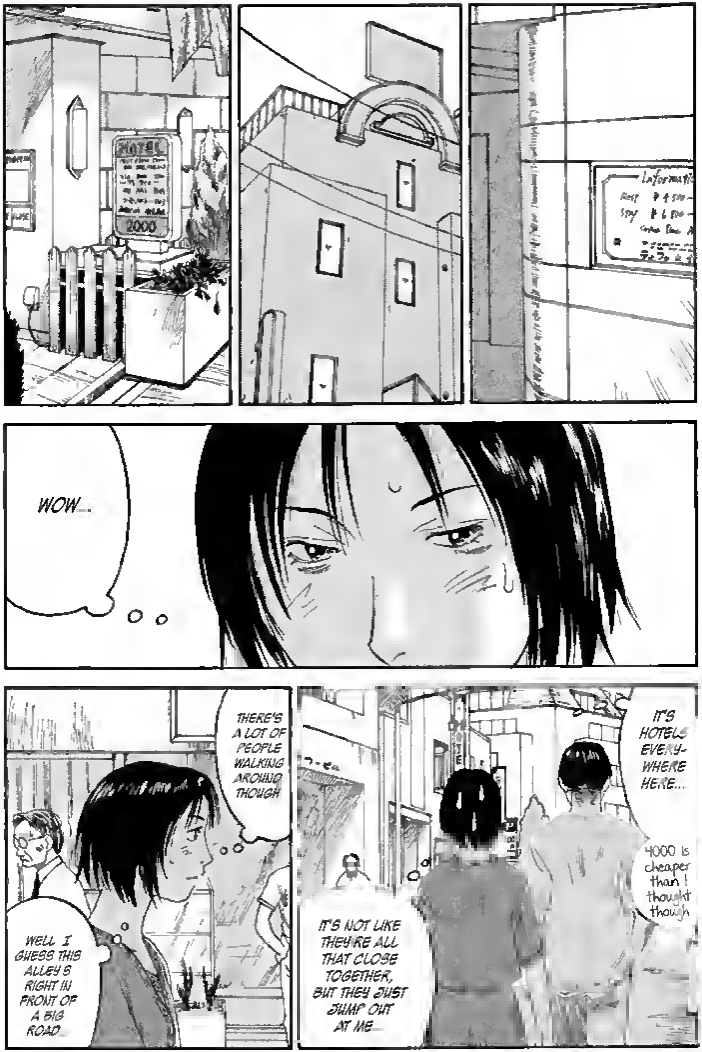
I FIGURE SINCE WE HAVE THE TIME...
Yikes!
OR!

...WANNA GO, THEN?
TO A HOTEL?

YOU KNOW, I KIND OF HAVE THE FEELING...

BUT IT'D PROBABLY BE BAD FOR US GOING FOR-WARD...
HE'D PROBABLY LET IT GO IF I MADE IT REALLY CLEAR I DON'T WANT TO DO IT,
That's Ako, after all.
Well that'd be great and all if you really mean it, haha

I MEAN,
YEAH, IT WAS TOP PRIORITY BUT NOT EVERYTHING
THIS IS THE ONLY THING YOU WERE LOOKING FORWARD TO ALL DAY LONG, ISN'T IT?
HEY! NOT ONLY, ONLY!
WELL, IT'S BEEN SO LONG I DON'T KNOW IF I'LL BE ANY GOOD...
YOU'RE CERTAINLY HAPPY.
MHMM
COURSE I AM
HEH
IT'S FINE, WHO CARES?


HOTEL
2000
WOW...
THERE'S A LOT OF PEOPLE WALKING AROUND THOUGH
WELL I GUESS THIS ALLEY IS RIGHT IN FRONT OF A BIG ROAD...
IT'S HOTELS EVERY-WHERE HERE...
4000 is cheaper than I thought though
IT'S NOT LIKE THEY'RE ALL THAT CLOSE TOGETHER, BUT THEY JUST JUMP OUT AT ME...

EVERYONE PROBABLY LOOKS AT US AND KNOWS EXACTLY WHY WE'RE HERE
UGH, I HATE IT
...IS SEX REALLY THAT GREAT?
IS IT REALLY WORTH BEING EMBARRASSED LIKE THIS?
NO! I CAN'T THINK LIKE THAT!
A HEALTHY SEX LIFE DOES A LOT TO STRENG-THEN A RELATION-SHIP!
THIS IS TOTALLY NECES-SARY!
I CAN'T IGNORE THAT

SO IN A WAY, I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE
THIS IS SOMETHING I HAVE TO DO, FOR AKIO'S SAKE
MAYBE I'M THINKING ABOUT THIS ALL WRONG
HOW ABOUT THIS PLACE?
HUH?
WHAT?
WAIT...
HOLD ON A SECOND

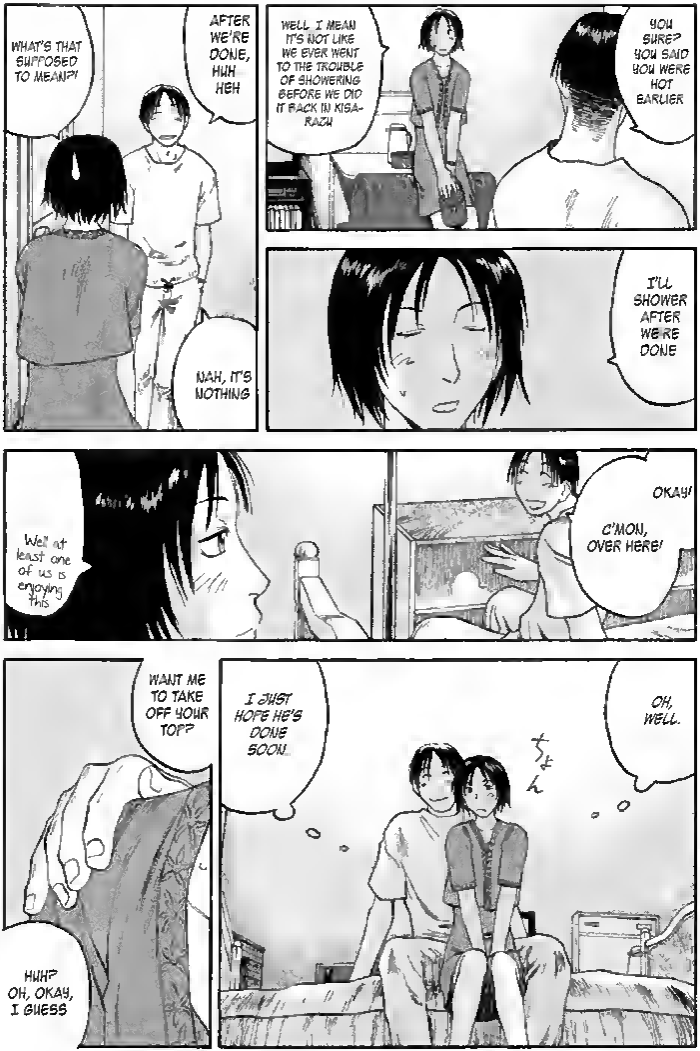
DO YOU REALLY WANNA START PENNY-PINCHING HERE?
THERE WAS A CHEAPER PLACE BACK THERE
YEAH, THERE'S A BUNCHA DIFFERENT KINDS
THEY DON'T?
THE PRICE YOU SEE ON THE OUTSIDE'S JUST THE ONE FOR THE CHEAPEST.
WELL, NO
'SIDES, IT'S NOT LIKE ALL THE ROOMS COST THE SAME.
HUH, I DIDN'T KNOW THAT
COME TO THINK OF IT, ALL THE PRICES SAID "STARTING AT"...
SO, WHICH ONE YOU WANT?

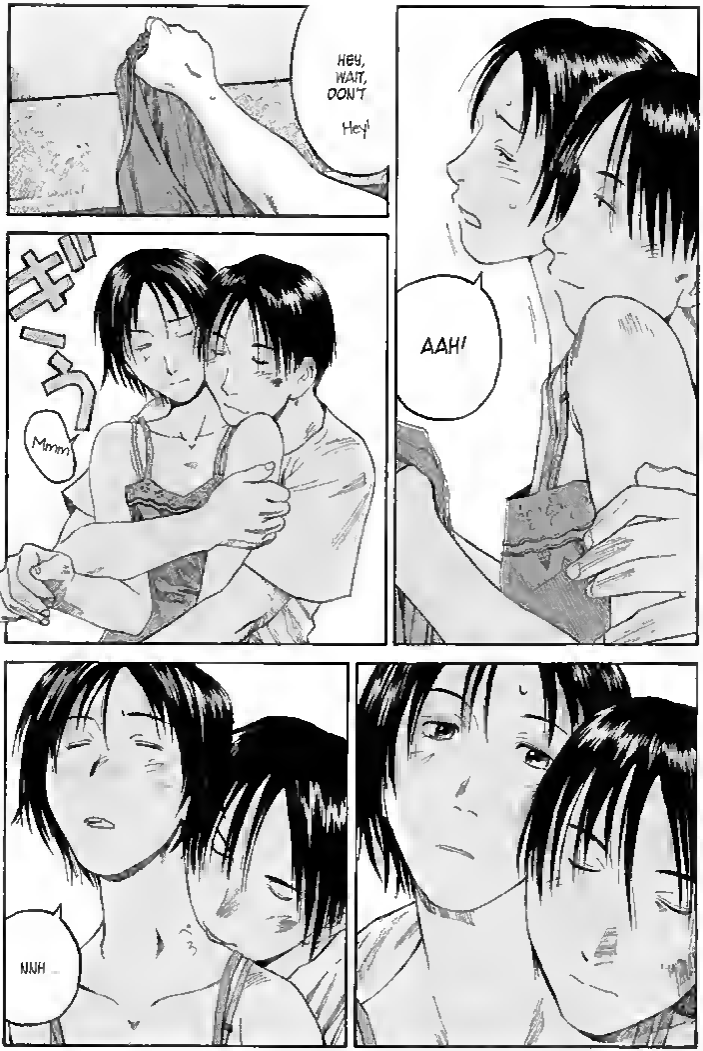
...AND THIS?
THE WALLS ARE ALL MIRRORS
AND THIS ONE?
SAYS IT'S ALL ABOUT FLASHING LIGHTS AND STUFF
Like a spaceship
WHAT'S THIS ONE?
HMM? OH, I THINK THEY HAVE PAINTINGS ON THE WALLS IN THOSE
Guernica?
HUH? OH, GREAT LET'S GO WITH THAT ONE
IT'S CHEAP, TOO
They all look so weird
AREN'T THERE ANY NORMAL ROOMS?
OF COURSE, LIKE THIS ONE RIGHT HERE
MHMM
Oh wow it just pops right out
THAT'S THE KEY?
NO, NO, IT'S FINE, LET'S JUST GO WITH THIS ONE
IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT THE PRICE, I CAN COVER THAT SO-

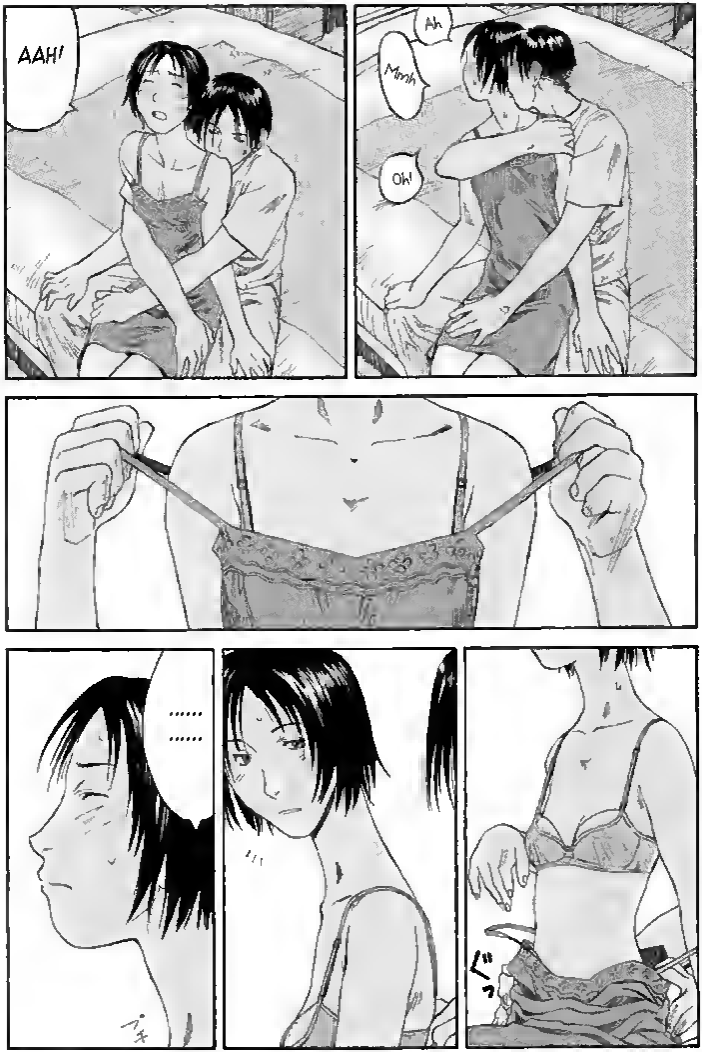
WE DON'T HAVE TO REGISTER AT THE FRONT OR ANY-THING?
NAH. THAT'S JUST SO WE CAN DROP OFF THE KEYS WHEN WE LEAVE
TKK
Hmm..

.....
.....
Haah
WOW
That was bad
HEY, ABOUT THOSE TWO
THINK THEY WERE HAVING AN AFFAIR?
DIDN'T THEY HAVE THAT KINDA FEEL ABOUT 'EM?
HUH?
LIKE MAYBE A SECRETARY AND HER BOSS OR SOMETHING...
The guy was a lot older
DON'T ASK ME...

Hmm..
WELL, THIS S WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE FOR THE MOST PART.
MM
THEY VE GOT A SHOWER IN THE BATHROOM WANNA WASH UP?
HMM? NO, I'M FINE. I DON'T WANT TO BOTHER
IT'S LESS FANCY THAN I'D THOUGHT IT WOULD BE
YOU RE THE ONE WHO WANTED A NORMAL ROOM
MAYBE I SHOULD'VE GONE FOR SOMETHING BETTER SINCE I'M STUCK HERE ANYWAY
well crappy
It's a little
HMM..


WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?!
AFTER WE'RE DONE, HUH HEH
NAH, IT'S NOTHING
WELL I MEAN IT'S NOT LIKE WE EVER WENT TO THE TROUBLE OF SHOWERING BEFORE WE DID IT BACK IN KISARAZU
YOU SURE? YOU SAID YOU WERE HOT EARLIER
I'LL SHOWER AFTER WE'RE DONE
Well at least one of us is enjoying this
OKAY! C'MON, OVER HERE!
WANT ME TO TAKE OFF YOUR TOP?
HUH? OH, OKAY, I GUESS
I JUST HOPE HE'S DONE SOON...
OH, WELL.
ちょん


HEY, WAIT, DON'T
Hey!
AAH!
Mmm
NNH


AAH!
Ah
Mmm
Oh!
.....
.....

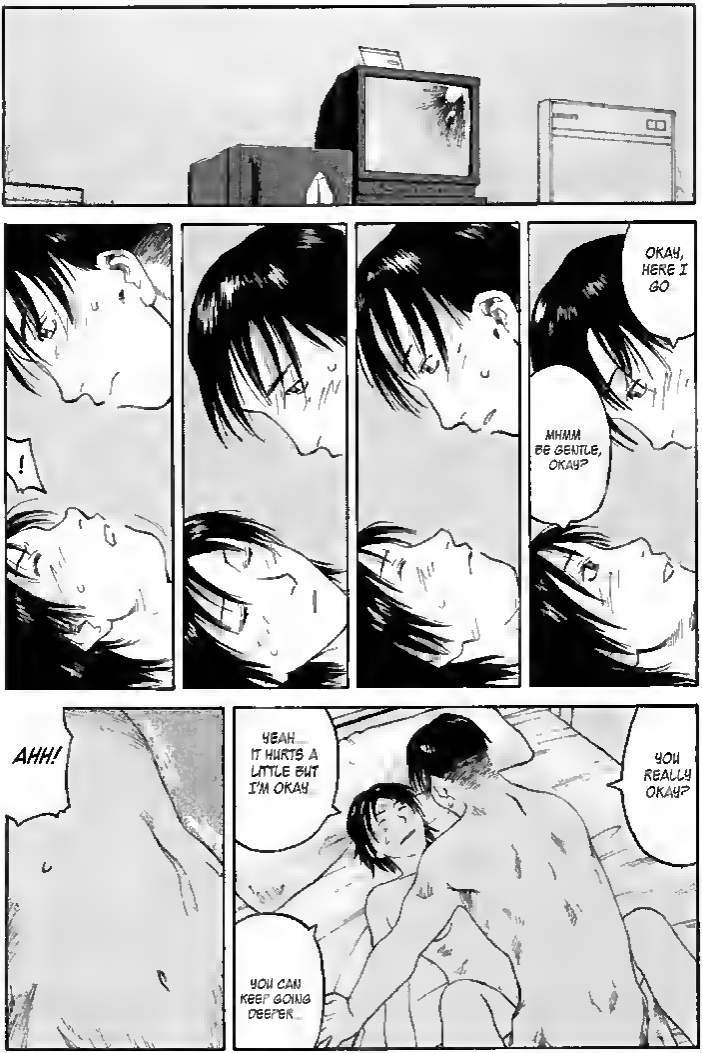
AHH...

YOU TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTHES TOO, AKIO
HMM?
I DON'T LIKE BEING THE ONLY ONE NAKED
YEAH,
I CAN SEE THAT.

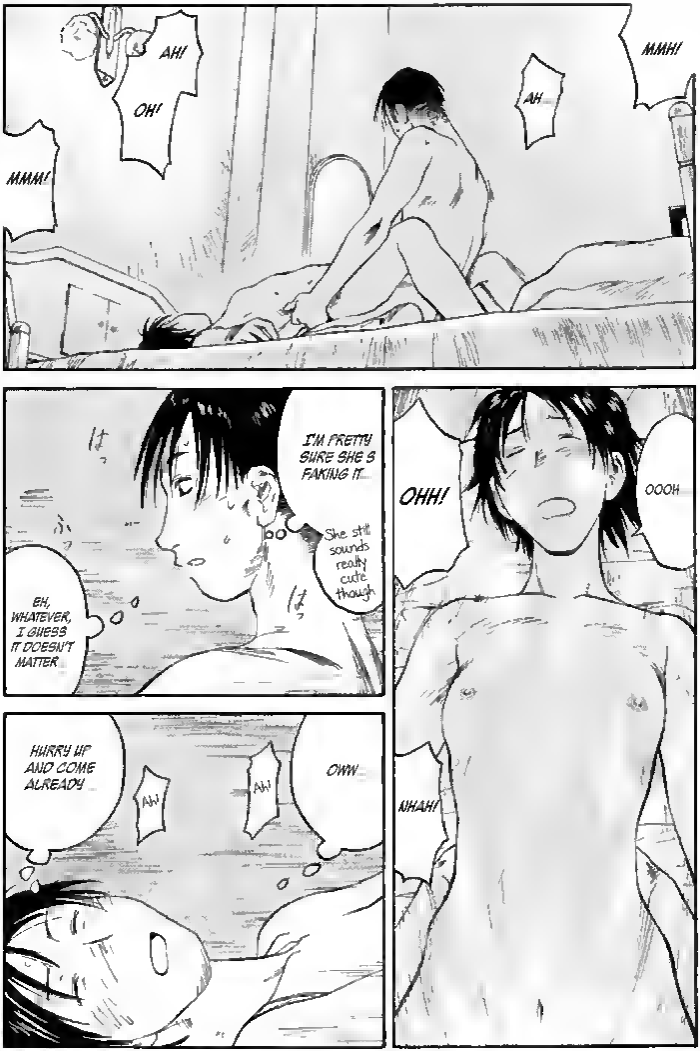
COULD YOU JUST BITE DOWN A LITTLE THERE...
AH...
MMM...
Nnh...
Hah...
Ooh...
OH!
OOH...

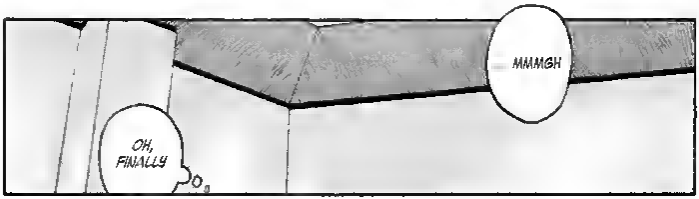
Mmm!
Ah!
……

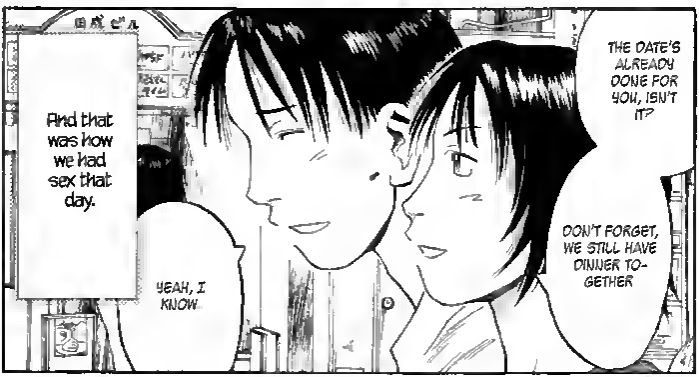
YOU'RE PRETTY WET, SO IT'S NOT THAT...
HMM ..
COULD YOU SLOW DOWN? IT HURTS A LITTLE...
HUH? REALLY?
THEN WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
HUH, ALRIGHT
IT'S BEEN A WHILE, AFTER ALL...
MAYBE I'M JUST HAVING TROUBLE GETTING IN THE MOOD...
WELL, ACTUALLY ALMOST SOAKING, TO BE HONEST...
THEN DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, KEEP GOING
IT'S FINE, JUST GO AHEAD I'M WET SO IT'LL BE FINE, RIGHT?
MEN ARE NEVER SATISFIED UNTIL THEY COME, ANYWAY...
BESIDES...
Let me get the condom on
AND MAYBE IT'LL GET BETTER IF YOU KEEP GOING
YOU SURE?
MHMM IT'S NOT SO BAD THAT I CAN'T BEAR IT


OKAY, HERE I GO
MHMM BE GENTLE, OKAY?
!
AHH!
YEAH... IT HURTS A LITTLE BUT I'M OKAY
YOU CAN KEEP GOING DEEPER...
YOU REALLY OKAY?

IT'S OKAY, KEEP MOVING
That means ASAP
YOU CAN COME WHENEVER YOU WANT
YEAH, I'M FINE...
ACTUALLY IT KINDA HURTS A LOT
IT WASN'T DRY GOING IN OR ANYTHING,
BUT ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT HURTING?
I SAID IT'S FINE THOUGH IF YOU TAKE TOO LONG IT MIGHT START HURTING...
ARE YOU REALLY OKAY WITH THIS? I'M GONNA BE THE ONLY ONE ENJOYING MYSELF...
I guess that's not so rare
AH...
Oh!
Mm!
Ohh!


AH!
OH!
MMM!
AH
MMH!
I'M PRETTY SURE SHE'S FAKING IT...
She still sounds really cute though
EH, WHATEVER, I GUESS IT DOESN'T MATTER
OHH!
OOOH
HURRY UP AND COME ALREADY
AH!
AH!
OWW
NHAH!

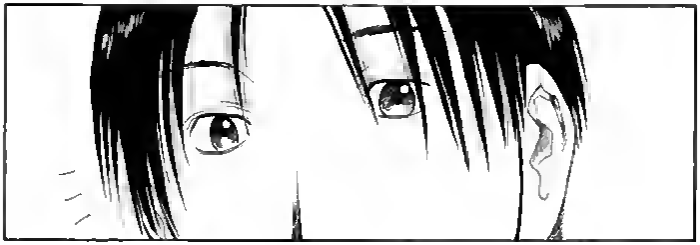

MMMGH
OH, FINALLY


And that was how we had sex that day.
THE DATE'S ALREADY DONE FOR YOU, ISN'T IT?
DON'T FORGET, WE STILL HAVE DINNER TOGETHER
YEAH, I KNOW.

I feel like I was blind to a lot of things back then.

THAT KINDA ANNOYS ME FOR SOME REASON
I bet there was another fight over that
HEH
OH, RIGHT, WE WERE GONNA BE MORE CASUAL SO I GUESS I SHOULD SAY, "SO AKIO"
RIGHT?
Shit I didn't know she shopped here too
OH, UHH, REALLY?
YEAH
A CURSE, HUH
Ahaha
I LAID A CURSE ON THEM, YOU KNOW
NOT THAT I CARE THEY'RE BOUND TO BREAK UP SOON
WELL, AKIO?
REMIND ME TO NEVER GET ON THIS WOMAN'S BAD SIDE
Funny isn't it? Hahaha
THAT'S IT THAT'S THE CURSE ALL I DID WAS SAY THAT TO HATOYAMA
HE'LL KEEP THINKING OF ME EVEN WHEN HE'S SLEEPING WITH HER

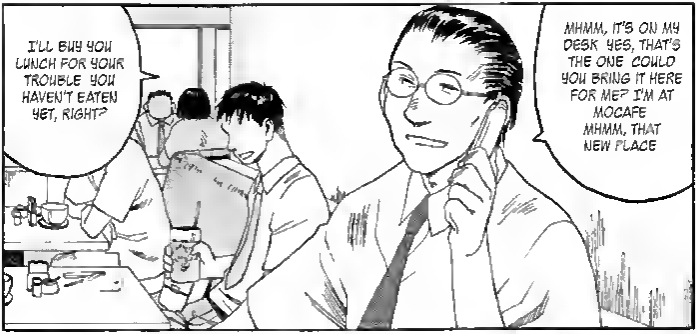
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
EVERYTHING GOING ALRIGHT WITH SOMA?
WELL, YEAH, PRETTY MUCH
OH, I SEE
THAT'S GOOD
COUPLES LIKE YOU AND SOMA ALWAYS END UP BREAKING UP IN DRAMAS, SO I WAS A LITTLE WORRIED
DO YOU HATE ME OR SOMETHING? HOLY SHIT, WOMAN!
Now that's a curse
WELL THEN SEE YOU LATER
ALTHOUGH I GUESS "LATER" WON'T BE UNTIL VACATION'S OVER. HUH
Hmm

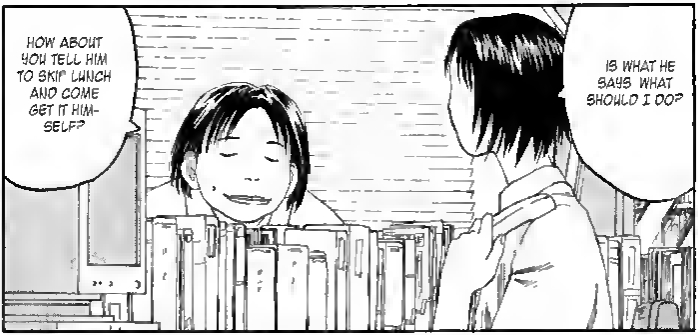


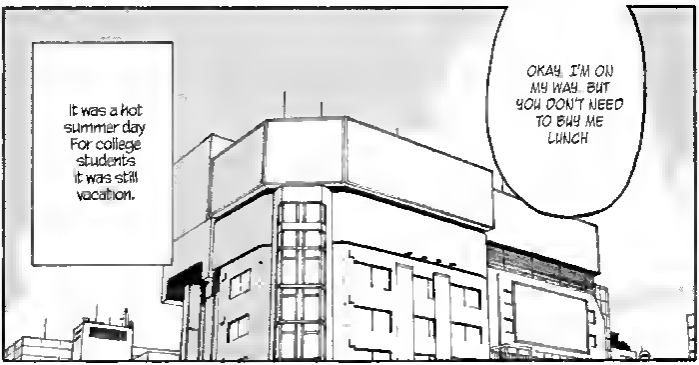
But just because you ignore something doesn't mean it goes away It always comes to the surface, sooner or later.

Something happened soon after, something that forced ***both*** of us to open our eyes.

Chapter 11 - End


I'LL BUY YOU LUNCH FOR YOUR TROUBLE YOU HAVEN'T EATEN YET, RIGHT?
MHMM, IT'S ON MY DESK YES, THAT'S THE ONE COULD YOU BRING IT HERE FOR ME? I'M AT MOCAFE MHMM, THAT NEW PLACE


HOW ABOUT YOU TELL HIM TO SKIP LUNCH AND COME GET IT HIM-SELF?
IS WHAT HE SAYS WHAT SHOULD I DO?


It was a hot summer day For college students it was still vacation.
OKAY, I'M ON MY WAY. BUT YOU DON'T NEED TO BUY ME LUNCH

Chapter 12
Subjective
And on that day I saw a thin man.

The first thing I heard was the sound of his fingers hitting the keys

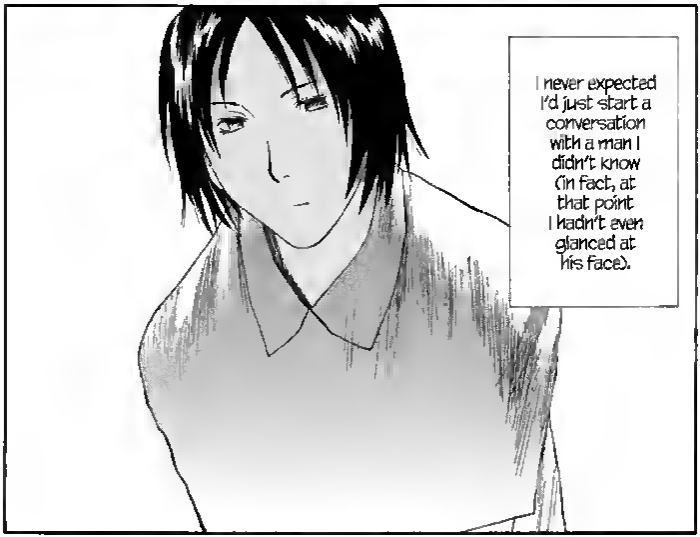
And then I saw his hands, dry as bone despite the heat.
They were thin, and slightly wrinkled, and they danced ceaselessly across his keyboard.
The dry staccato beat of the keys wound its way through the throng of passer-bys.

It was a sound..
..that felt very alien, in such a place.

TK TAK TK
TK TAK TK TAK
DO YOU MIND IF I SIT DOWN HERE?
EXCUSE ME

BE MY GUEST
OF COURSE NOT

Until just a moment ago I'd been cursing my weak skin, wishing I hadn't gone outside under the blazing sun wearing short sleeves.
Why did I sit there? I couldn't say.


I never expected I'd just start a conversation with a man I didn't know (in fact, at that point I hadn't even glanced at his face).

I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU
BUT DON'T THE PAPERS BLOCK THE SCREEN IF YOU HAVE THEM LIKE THAT?
His hands answer.
YES BUT I CAN TELL WHAT I'M TYPING WITH MY FINGERS, SO I DON'T NEED TO SEE THE SCREEN

TK TAK TAK TK TK
TK TK TAK TK TK
....
....
WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON?
IT'S FOR A FRIEND I'M COPYING THIS DOCUMENT ONTO THE COMPUTER

The tapping of keys stopped only when he replied to something I said.
But the beat kept going, and my voice, and his voice, both melted into that steady rhythm.
AREN'T YOU HOT?

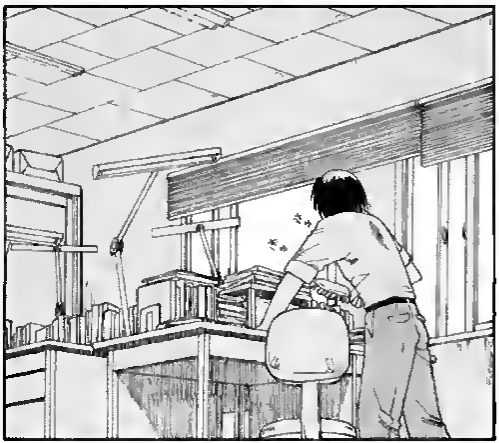
NO,
NOT AT ALL.

A chill ran down my spine.

DID YOU HAVE LUNCH?
HMM? NO, I DIDN'T
WELCOME BACK
YOU SHOULD HAVE MADE HIM BUY LUNCH FOR YOU. IT'S THE LEAST HE COULD DO MAKING YOU WALK AROUND IN THIS HEAT
HAHA, YES, YOU'RE RIGHT
A strange sense of deja vu overtook me.

But rather, it was because of what I'd felt at the time...
It wasn't because of that strangely cold man.
口座開設
Account Office
自動預払機
Auto Payment Machine

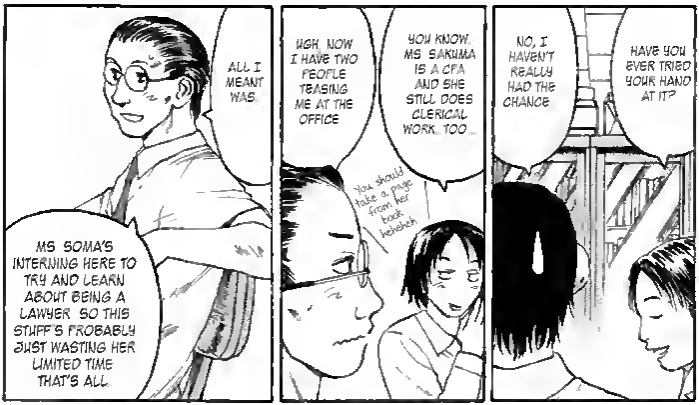
東京

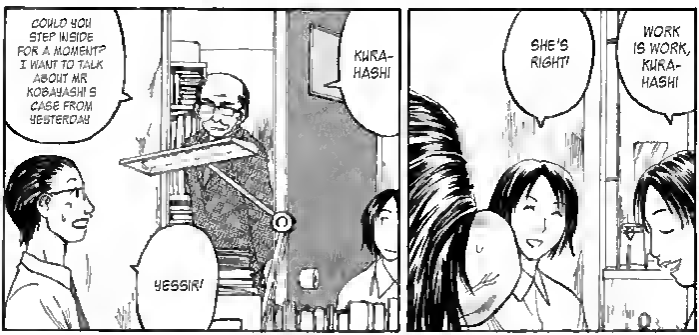


ズブ
GOOD MORNING, MS SAKUMA
MORNING

MS SAKUMA, COULD YOU HELP ME WITH THIS PART?
HMM? Let me see
OH, THIS THIS IS SET AS SEPARATE TAXATION, SO
OH! SO IT'S NOT WRITTEN HERE, SINCE THE TAX IS APPLIED AT THE SOURCE!
RIGHT IN ONE
YOU'D THINK THIS WAS A TAX OFFICE FROM THE WAY YOU TWO ARE TALKING

WHAT? OF COURSE NOT! I CARE ABOUT OTHER KINDS OF WORK, TOO!
KURAHASHI ONLY HAS EYES FOR WORK THAT LOOKS LAWYER-ISH
He thinks we're being dumb
YES, BUT I DON'T THINK IT'S WASTED EFFORT LAWYERS CAN DO TAX ATTORNEY WORK, TOO, AFTER ALL


ALL I MEANT WAS...
MS. SOMA'S INTERNING HERE TO TRY AND LEARN ABOUT BEING A LAWYER. SO THIS STUFF'S PROBABLY JUST WASTING HER LIMITED TIME. THAT'S ALL.
UGH. NOW I HAVE TWO PEOPLE TEASING ME AT THE OFFICE
YOU KNOW, MS. SAKUMA IS A CPA AND SHE STILL DOES CLERICAL WORK, TOO...
You should take a page from her book! Heheheh
NO, I HAVEN'T REALLY HAD THE CHANCE.
HAVE YOU EVER TRIED YOUR HAND AT IT?


COULD YOU STEP INSIDE FOR A MOMENT? I WANT TO TALK ABOUT MR. KOBAYASHI'S CASE FROM YESTERDAY.
YESSIR!
KURA-HASHI
SHE'S RIGHT!
WORK IS WORK, KURA-HASHI

I've never seen anything like this We have a clear case for libel here
If you read the two together you can fill in the blanks and figure out his address and phone number
Oh shut up
Good luck!
Do we know the content of these threatening calls and harassment incidents and how many times they've occurred?
Yes we have testimony from Mr Kobayashi himself as well as from his neighbors and family Also his mother has been diagnosed with neurosis
I see she was threatened then?
Yes of course We have the diagnosis from a doctor
Be sure to get an exact number on the medical bill
LEARNING IS FINE BUT DON'T LET IT DISTRACT YOU FROM WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO
OH! SORRY!
YOU'VE STOPPED WORKING, DEAR

RIGHT, RIGHT, SORRY
AND KURAHASHI, DON'T LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN LIKE THAT!
IT'S FINE
IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN

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HOW ABOUT WE BREAK FOR LUNCH?
OH, RIGHT
I was getting a little peckish actually
I KNOW KURAHASHI SAID YOU DIDN'T HAVE THE TIME TO STUDY

WELL, I'M NOT EXACTLY SWIMMING IN FREE TIME...
ARE YOU THAT BUSY?
BUT WHAT DO YOU THINK?
REALLY
Wow
BESIDES, THE STUFF I'M DOING RIGHT NOW IS JUST REVIEWING THINGS I'VE LEARNED ALREADY
BUT IF I STUDY IN THE LITTLE SPARE MOMENTS I HAVE, LIKE RIGHT NOW,
...A WORK-AHOLIC ARE WE?
...I CAN'T DENY THAT I SUPPOSE!
THEN IT'S NOT SO BAD! I READ IN THE TRAIN DURING MY COMMUTE, TOO
WHAT? WHY?
IT'S SO TEMPTING TO TEASE YOU A LITTLE

OH, I'M JOKING, OF COURSE I'M JUST A LITTLE JEALOUS OF HOW DRIVEN YOU ARE

10
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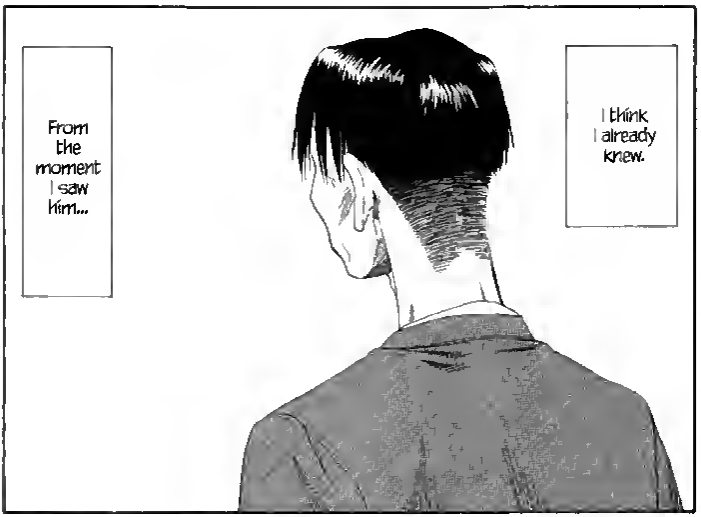
But then, I stopped in my tracks.


From the moment I saw him...
I think I already knew.

No...

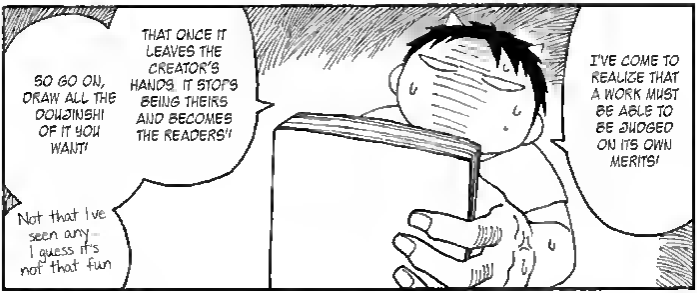
From the moment I saw his hands.
From the moment I heard the sound of his fingers on the keys.
That I'd already come to feel something for this person.

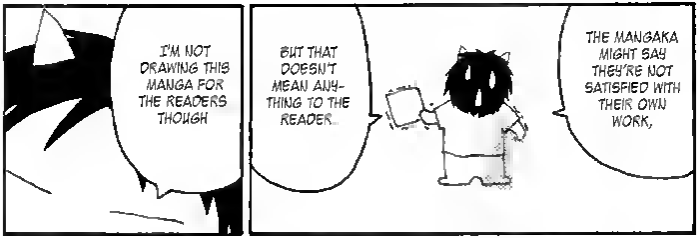
GOOD EVENING.
The deja vu I'd been feeling. It was love at first sight.
I BELIEVE WE VE MET BEFORE
And I smiled... Not at the ridiculousness of what had overtaken me, but in joy at seeing him.

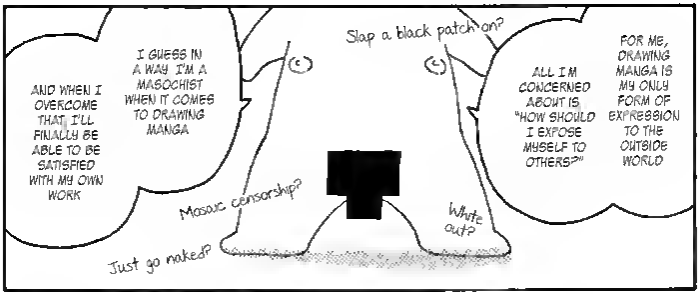
Chapter 12 - End

EMBARRASSING AFTERWORD 4

I GUESS I'M TIRED OF BEING EMBARRASSED NOW
RECENTLY, I MADE UP MY MIND
BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, I COULD SEE HOW IT MIGHT SEEM A LITTLE VULGAR
WHAT DO YOU THINK? I THINK I'VE GOTTEN BETTER THAN BEFORE, AT LEAST,
I'M LEAVING IT ALL IN YOUR HANDS, DEAR READERS
BUT FROM NOW ON,
AND SO!
THIS WILL BE THE FINAL INSTALLMENT OF THE EMBARRASSING AFTERWORD!
Of course I'd like to not make mistakes at all but I do so they have to be fixed
I'M STILL PRETTY INEXPERIENCED, SO I ASK FOR YOUR PATIENCE EVEN WHEN I INEVITABLY MAKE MISTAKES
BUT NOW I REALIZE I DON'T NEED TO MAKE EXCUSES FOR MYSELF AT ALL
TO BE HONEST I ONLY DO THIS TO TRY AND MAKE EXCUSES FOR MYSELF SO I RESOLVED TO MYSELF THAT I'D STOP ONCE I MADE SOMETHING THAT COULD STAND ON ITS OWN


SO GO ON, DRAW ALL THE DOUJINSHI OF IT YOU WANT!
THAT ONCE IT LEAVES THE CREATOR'S HANDS, IT STOPS BEING THEIRS AND BECOMES THE READERS'!
I'VE COME TO REALIZE THAT A WORK MUST BE ABLE TO BE JUDGED ON ITS OWN MERITS!
Not that I've seen any— I guess it's not that fun


I'M NOT DRAWING THIS MANGA FOR THE READERS THOUGH
BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN ANY-THING TO THE READER...
THE MANGAKA MIGHT SAY THEY'RE NOT SATISFIED WITH THEIR OWN WORK,


AND WHEN I OVERCOME THAT, I'LL FINALLY BE ABLE TO BE SATISFIED WITH MY OWN WORK
I GUESS IN A WAY I'M A MASOCHIST WHEN IT COMES TO DRAWING MANGA
Slap a black patch on?
Mosaic censorship?
White out?
Just go naked?
ALL I'M CONCERNED ABOUT IS "HOW SHOULD I EXPOSE MYSELF TO OTHERS?"
FOR ME, DRAWING MANGA IS MY ONLY FORM OF EXPRESSION TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD

...THAT THIS STORY WILL TURN OUT TO BE INTERESTING FOR MY READERS AS WELL...
Ack it fell
I'll wish on one of these countless stars...
AND SO I PRAY...

I CAN'T THINK OF A GOOD WAY TO GO ABOUT IT
BUT...
BUT I STILL WANT TO CONTINUE THESE END OF VOLUME PAGES SOMEHOW
I hope it doesn't affect sales haha
They're fun aren't they?
AND SO MY EMBARRASSED AFTERWORDS DRAW TO A CLOSE...
OH, THAT'S RIGHT! HOW ABOUT I ASK MY FRIENDS TO DRAW GUEST ILLUSTRATIONS FOR ME LIKE THEY HAVE IN DOUJINSHI! WAIT, I DON'T HAVE FRIENDS
Ahahaha
AND IT'S NOT THE CREATOR'S PLACE TO EXPLAIN THEIR OWN WORK... (WAIT, ISN'T THAT WHAT I'VE BEEN DOING SO FAR?)
Something I'll be satisfied with even years later
Hmm hmm
FOUR PANEL MANGA ARE TOO HARD, SO I CAN'T DO THOSE...
AND CONCEPT ART... WELL, THIS MANGA DIDN'T HAVE ANY OF THAT, SO I CAN'T ADD IT
I just draw over my drafts
WOW, THAT HURTS...
.....
Imprinting on himself
nothing good nothing good nothing good nothing good nothing good
VOLUME 3 MIGHT HAVE NOTHING BUT ADVERTISEMENTS HERE, BUT STILL BUY IT!
ドドドドドド
ANYWAY, I'LL THINK OF SOMETHING!!
Embarrassed to the end

Gonensei 2 - End